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Our Bodies, Our Souls

What the Pro-Choice Movement Must Learn to Say

BY NAOMI WOLF

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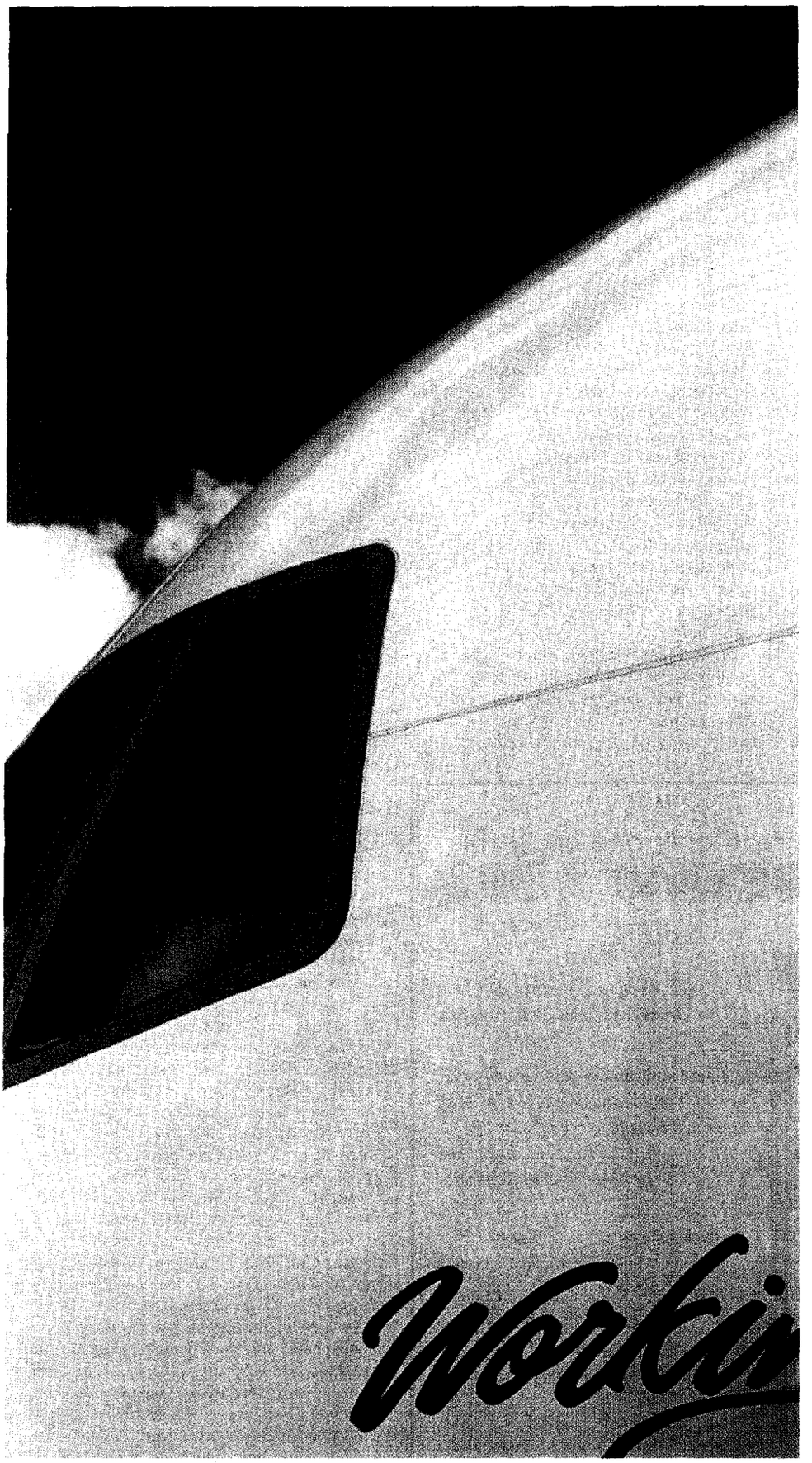

No one flies alone.

Here's a question our Director of Research and Engineering sometimes asks aspiring engineers: "When was the last time you received or gave help during a math test?" Most recoil because we're taught that "to help" is "to cheat." That's the whole point. The fact is, helping each other is central to our success. No one person, no matter how brilliant, can design a Space Station. Or this 777, our newest jetliner. The lesson in his question is this: Mastery of academic disciplines is just a start—the real-life assignment is all of us, working together.

BOEING

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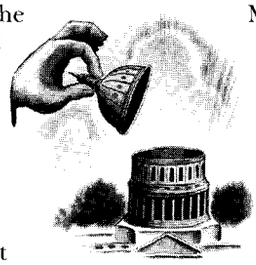
FROM WASHINGTON

Off center

Aspiring politicians are always staking claim to the political center. But where does it really lie? Colin Powell writes that he is "troubled" by the "extreme right," "put off by patronizing liberalism," and is searching for the "sensible center of the American political spectrum." In a *Newsweek* cover story, columnist Joe Klein argues that what Powell has described as the "sensible center" is actually the "radical middle" whose "frustration with both parties ... is the central fact of the coming election season." But is the "sensible center" that Powell seeks really the same as Klein's "radical middle"? It sounds like mere semantics; but in Klein's confusion of the two lies the promise and pitfalls of a Powell candidacy.

The concept of the radical middle was first used to explain George Wallace's support in 1968 and, most recently, Ross Perot's appeal in 1992. What, or whom, it denotes is very different from what Powell calls the "sensible center." The unruly, unfashionable and downscale denizens of the radical middle think the country has been mortgaged to Wall Street bankers, Washington lobbyists, welfare bureaucrats and their shiftless clients. By contrast, the upscale suburbanites and Wall Streeters of the sensible center thrill to Bill Weld's combination of social liberalism and fiscal conservatism but blanch at the very mention of Pat Robertson or Pat Buchanan. Members of both these "centers" justifiably fear that they won't have a candidate in 1996—but they may not be satisfied with the same man.



Sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset was probably the first to use the term "radical centrism." In his 1960 book, *Political Man*, he invoked this concept to explain the origins of fascism in Europe. In a 1974 article in *The Nation* and in a book, *The Radical Center*, sociologist Donald Warren argued that the new movements against school busing, welfare and high taxes represented a "middle American radicalism." Though Warren was a liberal, his ideas gained currency among new right strategists Kevin Phillips and Sam Francis.

In the view of all these writers, the radical center was patriotic—deeply concerned with the nation's decline—populist and anti-establishment, but sharply opposed to the radicalism of the new left. Middle-American radicals—or MARs—saw themselves as the victims, Warren wrote, of an "unholy alliance" between "the establishment"—identified with both big business and government—and racial minorities. The MARs were primarily white males and were concentrated in the South and in the Northern suburbs formed by "white flight." Many had been Democrats, but in 1968 they backed George Wallace and in 1972, Nixon.

Over two decades, the radical middle has remained intact, but its political focus has shifted. In 1978, the new right mobilized its patriotism against the Panama Canal treaty; in the early '80s, Reagan rallied the radical middle against the "evil empire." But, with the cold war's end, the attention of middle-class radicals has shifted to America's declining international economic position and to the stagnation in living standards—which they blame on illegal aliens, runaway shops and unscrupulous trading partners with Washington lobbyists. This economic nationalism, together with the older anti-government, anti-welfare, anti-tax sentiments, makes up the current worldview of the radical center.

Most reporters and columnists underrate the role of economic nationalism in the radical center. Klein omits trade and immigration from his list of what the "radical middle" cares about. *Wall Street Journal* columnist Gerald Seib, on the eve of the United We Stand convention this August, wrote that "Perot voters aren't motivated by some particular ideology regarding economic nationalism, but by a desire to see their leaders get things done." At the convention, however, the Perot delegates hooted "NAFTA" at Bob Dole and gave their biggest hands to free-trade opponents Buchanan and Ohio Representative Marcy Kaptur. Seib's analysis was off-base but not surprising considering that journalists from publications like *The Wall Street Journal* and *Newsweek* tend to represent the sensible rather than the radical center.

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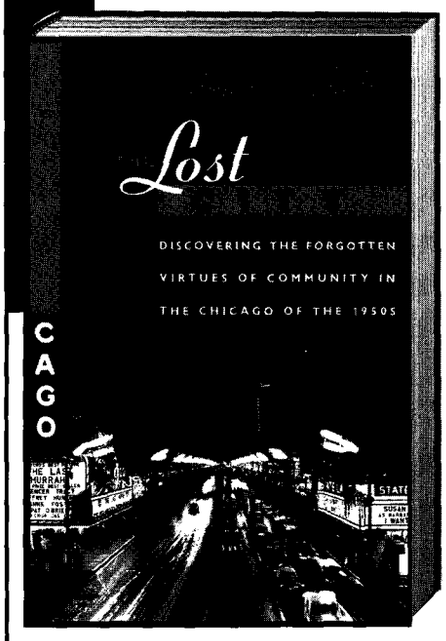
"If you have time to read only one book this year, make it **THE LOST CITY**."
—Amitai Etzioni



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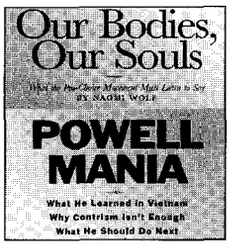

Cover by Eric Baker for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Articles on pages 4, 18, 20 & 26.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Unfrozen

To the editors:
Regarding Hanna Rosin's "The Evil Empire" (September 11):

my dear good Hanna Rosin
what you are proposin'
is so absurd I've chosen
a ditty response ... unfrozen!

you've taken little lies and half-truths
mixed in slurs—without any proof,
yes, there are those who may call me
uncouth
but why make me out to be John Wilkes
Booth?

as for my diet and as for my dress
clearly I don't deserve this duress!
when before a mirror I take off my jeans
it's quite clear to see I'm not living on
beans.

rotund with no hips,
my pants they do slip,
it's not meant to be hip
just—my body does dip.

no, the rainforest's not saved, but we do
our small part.
yes, some projects do fail, but we haven't
lost heart.
we'll just move ahead, horse before cart,
trying to ignore the occasional dart.

"Doing good's just a con," you say in your
canto
"Leave the real work to GM, Mobil,
Monsanto."
oh, Hanna, you know that's one thing we
can't do
we'll do our part—you do what you do.

BEN COHEN
Chairman and co-founder,
Ben & Jerry's
Waterbury, Vermont

To the editors:
In chronicling the hypocrisy at Ben & Jerry's, Hanna Rosin omitted a telling example. Ben & Jerry's has railed against the use of recombinant bovine somatotropin (rBST), the hormone injected into dairy cows to increase milk production, because it will supposedly put small dairy farmers out of business. During Vermont Dairy Days last spring, Ben & Jerry's created a stir by announcing it was quitting the International Dairy Foods Association to put its dues money to better use by fighting rBST. But guess which ice-cream maker refuses to guarantee that its own products are rBST-free?

LARRY KATZENSTEIN
Bronx, New York

To the editors:
It is unfortunate that Hanna Rosin did not bother to call the Social Venture Network (SVN) for comment and a factual description of our meeting at which we did indeed discuss the Body Shop and the larger issues represented by the challenges to live consistently with one's values. In fact, some journalists who are members of SVN were in attendance. We discussed responsible business and responsible journalism. Had Rosin talked to me, or another of the conference's organizers, she would have learnt that the discussion involving the Body Shop included many different (including critical) points of view.

SVN exists to help small- to medium-sized companies and investors find ways to promote the marketplace as a vehicle for social development. SVN members come together to talk about how to close the gap between values, rhetoric and everyday business practices. There are no icons. SVN exists to keep making that point and to remind ourselves that the distance between our rhetoric and our actions is the field in which we labor.

That's no shield, but an invitation to debate what constitutes ethical practice.

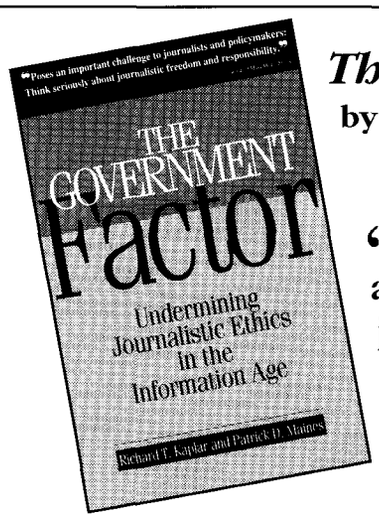
PAM SOLO
President, Social Venture Network
San Francisco, California

Hanna Rosin replies:
I did indeed bother to call SVN, and the person I spoke to told me the same thing most participants told me: the meeting was "private."

Far cry

To the editors:
Might I suggest that Charles Lane's review essay, "Don't Cry for Me, Guatemala" (September 11), is, to put it mildly, ideologically blinkered? Much of Lane's essay consists of an entirely uncritical (and not altogether accurate) summary of David Stoll's recent book, *Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala.* Echoing Stoll, Lane suggests that Guatemala's guerrilla groups have never enjoyed much popular support, despite the testimonies in Jennifer Harbury's book, *Bridge of Courage: Life Stories of the Guatemalan Compañeros and Compañeras,* which he dismisses as "agitprop."

Stoll's study, unfortunately, is much too narrowly designed to be "a credible account of the rise and fall of the Guatemalan revolutionary left," as Lane (not Stoll) claims. Why? To begin with, Stoll focuses exclusively on the encounters of one ethnic group, the Ixil Mayas, with one of Guatemala's three major guerrilla groups. Stoll himself emphasizes that his findings cannot be mechanically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generalized to Guatemala's other ethnic communities, from which other guerrilla groups attempted to recruit. Stoll also points out that he was, of course, unable to interview the estimated 15,000 Ixils (out of a total population of fewer than 85,000) who were killed or who starved to death during the brutal counterinsurgency of the 1980s; nor did he interview any of the estimated 12,000 Ixils who joined the clandestine Communities of Population in Resistance (CPRs) in the mountains; nor, unlike Harbury, did Stoll have access to the guerrillas themselves. And Stoll admits that he simply doesn't know whether those Ixils whom he was able to interview would express sympathies for the guerrillas to a non-Ixil-speaking gringo.

One can't help but feel that Lane finds Stoll convincing primarily because Stoll confirms Lane's ideological prejudices. In one unfortunate instance, Lane's ideological animus is especially conspicuous. I refer to his claim that Gaspar Ilom, the Guatemalan guerrilla leader, as well as Jennifer Harbury, "are ready to fight to the last Guatemalan." Surely this is a gross rhetorical exaggeration, and a reprehensible one at that. Nothing in Stoll's book supports such a claim, and the long quote from Harbury's book that immediately follows Lane's assertion, presumably as supporting "evidence," carries no such implication. In fact, many informed observers believe that the Guatemalan guerrillas, like the FMLN in El Salvador, are willing and even eager to lay down their arms if they can obtain reasonable assurances that they will be able to participate safely in Guatemalan civic and political affairs. I know of no serious observer who believes that the guerrillas are the "utopian" diehards, completely insensitive to popular aspirations, of Lane's imagination.

JEFF GOODWIN
New York, New York

Blind spots

To the editors:

I read "Are Breast Implants Actually OK?" by Marcia Angell (September 11) with great interest. While I agree with her that no definite association between breast implants and collagen vascular diseases has been established, I would like to point out a small but real health risk imposed by breast implants.

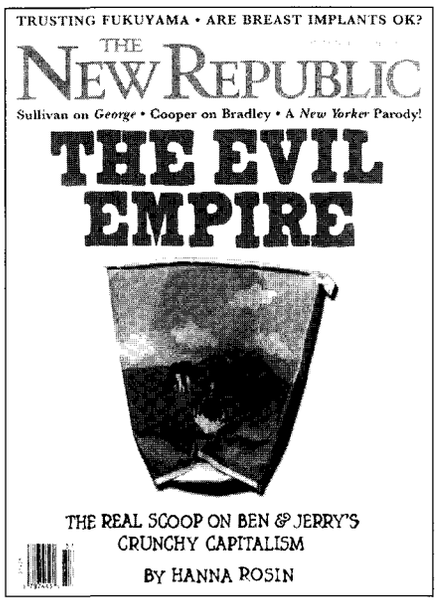
Successful treatment of breast cancer depends to a great extent on early detection. Mammographic screening is the best way of detecting these cancers at an early, more curable stage. It is well known that even using special mammographic techniques, large amounts of breast tissue are obscured by the implants. A cancer that develops in one of these mammography "blind spots" may grow to a very large size and even spread to areas outside the breast before it can be detected. The implants themselves do not appear to cause cancer; however, their presence makes early detection of cancer using mammography more difficult.

STEFAN TIGGES
Atlanta, Georgia

Without a clue

To the editors:

Evidently the editor does not blue-pencil his own inanities, but Andrew Sullivan's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NEW REPUBLIC
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THE EVIL EMPIRE
THE REAL SCOOP ON BEN & JERRY'S CRUNCHY CAPITALISM
BY HANNA ROSIN

moist-eyed obeisance to "Jane Roe's" conversion is journalism at its most fat-headed ("Paninaro," September 11). I refer to this statement: " ... it seems that Roe was eventually overcome by two things: the sight of some children's swings hanging empty, as haunting an image of the tragedy of abortion as one can think of; and the compassion of a few individuals in the pro-life movement." Yes, possibly if abortion had been illegal in America some of those swings would have been occupied—by those few children lucky enough to have been adopted by caring families. Millions of legal abortions have been carried out in the United States; if abortion had been illegal, we would have seen more than children in swings. We would have seen more abused children, more children on the streets, more children (and juveniles) in jail—and millions of illegal abortions, many resulting in mutilated or dead women. As for the compassion of individuals in the "pro-life" movement, how compassionate can these people be when they try to impose their own values on women who, for private reasons of their own, have decided that they want to end their pregnancies? Such compassion is narrow and shallow indeed.

MICHAEL JORRIN
New York, New York

To the editors:

Nice to see that Andrew Sullivan has been getting out and seeing some of the summer movies, but I need help understanding his deep thoughts on the subject of one of them, *Clueless*. He writes that watching the movie made him realize "that the twentysomething culture has now matured to a point at which it is fully able to satirize itself at a wonderfully high level.... It seems that the generation that really came of age after the cold war is beginning to shape a sensibility worthy of the moment." Glad to hear it, but since *Clueless* is a film written and directed by the 41-year-old Amy Heckerling, an "ideological, humorless, boomer" in his words—and the same generation, come to think of it, as Oliver Stone—and centers on the life of a 16-year-old, how did Sullivan derive from it so much information and inspiration about twentysomethings? *Clerks*—a film accurately described by its maker as "ninety minutes of dick jokes"—was the movie actually made by a twentysomething. A "curiously humane" sensibility indeed.

Maybe that encounter with JFK Jr. was more overpowering and disorienting than Sullivan thought. It's probably just as well that the editor-in-chief isn't writing the movie reviews.

ALAN WADE
New York, New York

Fan mail

To the editors:

Ken Fellata ("Awestruck," September 11) pictures Michael Eisner fondling a fanbelt and saying, "This is the shape of the future." Fellata must have let his subscription to *Popular Mechanics* run out: cars have not been equipped with fanbelts for some years now. Eisner, in fondling a fanbelt, is actually fondling the past.

TIMOTHY J. MILLER
Austin, Texas

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

The New Gilded Age

The American economy is expanding and productivity is reaching its highest levels in many years. Inflation is down, the stock market is up. So everything is going along pretty well, right? Wrong. Things are going very well for some people, but less and less well for most. In fact, we now have the widest income gap between wealthy and ordinary Americans in our modern history, and the widest of any industrialized country. For a nation with our traditions, that's not a good sign.

For some time now, the vast majority of U.S. workers have not seen gains from the economy's growing productivity reflected in their pay and working conditions. In fact, among all the rising economic indicators, individual earning power is the one that has been dropping steadily. As Sean Reilly reports in the July/August issue of *The Washington Monthly*, male high school graduates (who make up more than half of all male workers) have lost 20 percent of their earning power in real terms since 1972. Nearly 20 percent of all workers today take home pay that leaves them below the poverty line. A major study by the Economic Policy Institute shows that income growth for American families slowed to under 1 percent in the 1970s, neared a standstill in the 1980s, and actually went into reverse between 1989 and 1993, when the typical family lost 6.9 percent in total income. And the minimum wage will reach a 40-year low in real terms next year unless Congress acts to raise it.

We need a vital union movement today as much as we ever have.

Working people feel the squeeze not just in pay but in shrinking benefits. Reilly notes that the proportion of workers with employer-paid pension plans dropped by 25 percent between 1979 and 1988, and the proportion of workers under 65 who had employer-paid health care dropped from 63 to 56 percent.

At the opposite end of the income spectrum, things look a lot brighter. In 1972, corporate chief executives earned 40 times what average workers earned; now it's 140 times as much. In the 1980s, the total amount spent on salaries of over $1 million grew by 2,200 percent—50 times the growth of salaries between $20,000 and $50,000. Between 1980 and 1989, income in the top 1 percent of American families grew by 62.9 percent—amounting to 53.2 percent of *all* families' income growth in those years—while income in the bottom 60 percent of all families declined. By the end of the decade, the total income of the top 1 percent equaled the total income of the bottom 40 percent.

In the Gilded Age of the late 1800s, the contrast between the way the richest Americans lived and the conditions of the people they employed stoked the rise of the labor movement. By the 1950s, one-third of American workers were union members. The more decent wages they won through collective bargaining allowed them to move into the middle class, investing in homes, consumer goods, and college education for their children. It's no mystery that the greatest expansion of the middle class in our history coincided with the peak years of union membership. That's what unions exist to do: Enable working people to share in the prosperity produced by their labor.

It's also no mystery that the declining earnings of American workers parallel the decline in unions' strength over the last 20 years. Today, only 1 in 6 workers is represented by a union, and if you take out public-sector unions, fewer than 1 in 10 are union members. If that trend continues, by the year 2005 fewer than 1 in 20 private-sector workers will belong to a union.

U.S. businesses have been able to enhance profits and weaken unions by moving many unskilled and semi-skilled jobs offshore, eliminating others, and using the harsh threat of permanent worker replacement to force employees into wage and benefit concessions. A lot of the school clothes that U.S. parents buy for their children, for example, are actually made by other children, who work for pennies in horrific sweatshops around the globe and never see a schoolbook. Sweatshops and child labor are also on the rise here. And even the skilled jobs that are supposed to be the backbone of our high-tech future are now being moved into the hands of college graduates in other countries who will work for less, as the August 28 *New York Times* reported in its lead story.

Economic globalization is proving to be great for investors but terrible for ordinary Americans. Ask yourself this: If less and less of America's wealth is reinvested in our own workforce, who will buy the houses and consumer goods, pay the taxes, invest in college, support the American dream? The truth is that we are on a dangerous course today, and we need a vital union movement now as much as we ever have to fight for the interests of working Americans. Labor policies that limit the economic opportunity of the many so a few may feast will not sustain this country.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.

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OCTOBER 16, 1995

JORDAN AND THE PEACE

It is tempting to believe that every emergent step toward something called Palestine will enhance the stability of the entire Middle East. That is certainly what President Clinton wanted to convey when he invited all of the Arab polities that have signed some sort of peace agreement with Israel—a very short list actually: only Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and the PLO—and, of course, Israel itself, to another White House fest, this time celebrating the Taba signing between Yasir Arafat and Shimon Peres. Like the lawn party that confirmed the Oslo accords two years ago, this event makes it seem as if the United States was central to the process, which it was not. But given its sparse record of achievement in foreign policy, it is easy to understand why the administration has claimed this development as its own. Not surprisingly and notwithstanding, all the invitees dutifully came.

Surely, however, they did not come with any real confidence in their host's capacities, or in their own, to still the antagonistic currents of secular tyranny and religious fanaticism which course through their region, often acting against each other but always acting against that great mass of virtually voiceless Arabs who want to live their lives free of the cruel armed doctrines that dominate the region. Hope leads a bitter existence in these surroundings. Even amid the éclat of expanding self-government, then, ordinary Palestinians would immediately grasp as callow the headline in the (London) *Financial Times* prophesying "DEMOCRACY TO EXTEND ACROSS WEST BANK." From your mouth to God's ear, they might say. As it happens, the real optimists about this part of the world are those who know little about it.

The new agreement accomplishes what the Palestinians devoutly wish for: the departure of Israeli troops from the cities of the West Bank, that is, the beginning of the end of the experience of occupation. It is cynical to dismiss this as a sham. (The continued Israeli presence around the urban areas, and their insistence on not yet surrendering control of certain roads, is not a form of occupation, it is a form of self-defense.) The insult—and the alibi—of Israeli soldiers in Palestinian streets will soon be gone. The moment of truth is upon the ideologues and the stone-throwers. Palestinian politics will have to move from protest to governance, from violence to the unglamorous business of muddling through.

Now that most Palestinians will live under the rule of their own, they will not be able to escape certain facts. One of these is that Yasir Arafat and his men are not democrats or constitutionalists by conviction or habit. What they learned in the Palestinian mini-state in Lebanon after 1976 about the privileges of power (which is to say, about the fruits of intimidation) was too heady to unlearn, and their experience as globally romanticized revolutionaries only reinforced their ways. In Gaza and in Jericho, the prep-school for the rest of the territories, they showed that their fists will fall heavily on those whose visions of Palestine vary from their own.

The dissidents and deviationists whom the PLO must control are large in number and well-equipped, not least by the certainty that they are God's shock troops, like the extremists who daily carry out atrocities in Algeria and those who used to carry out like enormities in Egypt until the regime killed enough of them to turn their movement into a manageable problem. Dealing with terrorists is never easy, as Arafat should know. It has been one of his achievements, in recent months, to have taken serious action against Hamas. It doesn't help, though, that he continues to apotheosize terrorists from the PLO's own ranks as heroes and martyrs.

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Nor does it help that many of those now to be designated (or already designated) as police are not strangers to the less legitimate uses of violence.

The present agreement is testimony to Shimon Peres's ingenuity in a tight spot, and to his patience. (It is still impossible to know if it is also testimony to his credulity.) He had to endure the assertions of one PLO official that Israelis would never be allowed to worship at Abraham's tomb in Hebron, Rachel's in Bethlehem and Joseph's in Nablus, that they were all, in fact, purely Muslim holy places. And then there was the usual psychodrama, with Arafat throwing tantrums, his last departure from the negotiations accompanied by shrieks that "we are not slaves." When all was over, the chief Palestinian negotiator had to admit that they had achieved much more than anticipated. And they had.

The fact is that Yasir Arafat lives a charmed life. Compromise in these talks is a one-way street. The only concession he made at Taba was to promise that parts of the Palestinian covenant pledging the destruction of Israel would be annulled within two months. But this is a promise he has made before. Nobody seems to remember his enthusiasms for both the Ayatollah Khomeini and Saddam Hussein, so nobody holds them against him. If he does or says something offensive, almost everyone's reflex is to lavish more money on him: to pay him to behave. This is not only an "incentive" to "economic development"; it is also a bribe. And bribed peace is a troublesome thing.

But an independent Palestine does not assure a stable Middle East. It may, in fact, be an invitation to—and an opportunity for—mischief. A state is not less able to mount an irredenta than a movement or a mob, and a Palestinian state could well provoke discord and discontent among the Arabs of Israel, who might take to the streets with yet another *intifada* demanding "freedom," this time for the Galilee.

A more immediate target of this mischief—and the targeters would be Syria (yes, even Syria) or Iraq or either one of them in association with Palestinians on the eastern bank of the river—is likely to be Jordan. Exactly such a move against Jordan was made in 1970, and it could happen again. This would be nothing less than a tragedy, and for more than one reason. Jordan is the only country in the region which has truly made a reciprocal peace with Israel, and it is a peace which, despite two wars between them, has historical precedent. (The king's great-uncle, Faisal I of Iraq, came to an understanding with Chaim Weizmann, then the head of the world Zionist movement, which, had the British not sabotaged it, would have changed history.) Jordan, moreover, is a rare Arab country where dissidents need not fear a banging on the door at two o'clock in the morning. People speak their minds in Jordan, organize for their interests and ideas, die in their own beds. In that sense, the kingdom is a standing reproach to all its neighbors. So it is taken in Damascus and Baghdad, and so it will be taken wherever the Palestinian Authority establishes its national institutions.

One would think that the safety of a government with such a history and of such character would be of paramount concern to the United States. For years Washington nurtured a special relationship with Amman. This was ruptured when King Hussein tilted toward Iraq in the Gulf war. But the king (unlike Arafat) has well atoned for this sin. No one has now more plausibly attacked Saddam Hussein and urged his overthrow than the king of Jordan, not even those other monarchs whose countries were massively threatened by the Iraqi Ba'ath. In fact, Hashemite rule in Iraq which, as Elie Kedourie noted, was "begun with intrigue and civil war [and] ended in horror and blood" in 1958, is now an object of nostalgia. (It is said that Saddam even fears a Sharifian restoration.) When the Iraqi tyrant's sons-in-law fled to Jordan, President Clinton volunteered that the U.S. would defend the kingdom from attack. Maybe. What he has *not* done is made Jordan a cornerstone of American Middle East policy, which it very much deserves to be. Egypt, with its annual $2 billion emolument, chose a necessary peace. Jordan chose a genuine peace.

One might argue that Jordan's military could never actually deter Syria or Iraqi from attack. Syria has a numerical edge in combat aircraft of 5 to 1, in tanks of roughly the same ratio. Iraq's margin is 4 to 1 in aircraft and 2 to 1 in tanks. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Jordan's tanks and aircraft are mostly antiquated (M47s and M48s, a few M60s, Centurions and Chieftains; F5s and some Mirage F1s). Such an inventory is a standing invitation to neighboring aggressors. What Jordan still retains is the quality and discipline of its troops, and in this respect it is still the Arab Legion of lore. Providing this military with quality tools would deter Jordan's enemies not less than giving it parity in numbers. And there is another kind of deterrence: the sort provided by the symbolic politics of enmeshment with a great power.

In its lack of enthusiasm for Jordan, the Clinton administration has failed Jordan (and Israel, and the United States); and in this failure it has endangered the very peace and regional stability that it has been pursuing. It is true that almost all of Jordan's $700 million debt to the U.S. has been forgiven, despite the now taken-for-granted Jesse Helms impediment to foreign policy *tout court.* But that alone will not deflect Assad, Saddam and company from temptation.

A $100 million request for used military hardware is now before a Senate-House conference committee. That's a start. But it is only a start. Jordan's army needs upgrading. No Israeli general would spend a sleepless night worrying if Jordan had F15s and F16s. Quite to the contrary: these are interceptor craft, and they would add to the military balance in favor of those countries which have cast their lot with peace. The American relation with Jordan requires nurture, if for no other reason but that its people should know that risks taken for a humane cause evoke our friendship and protection. •

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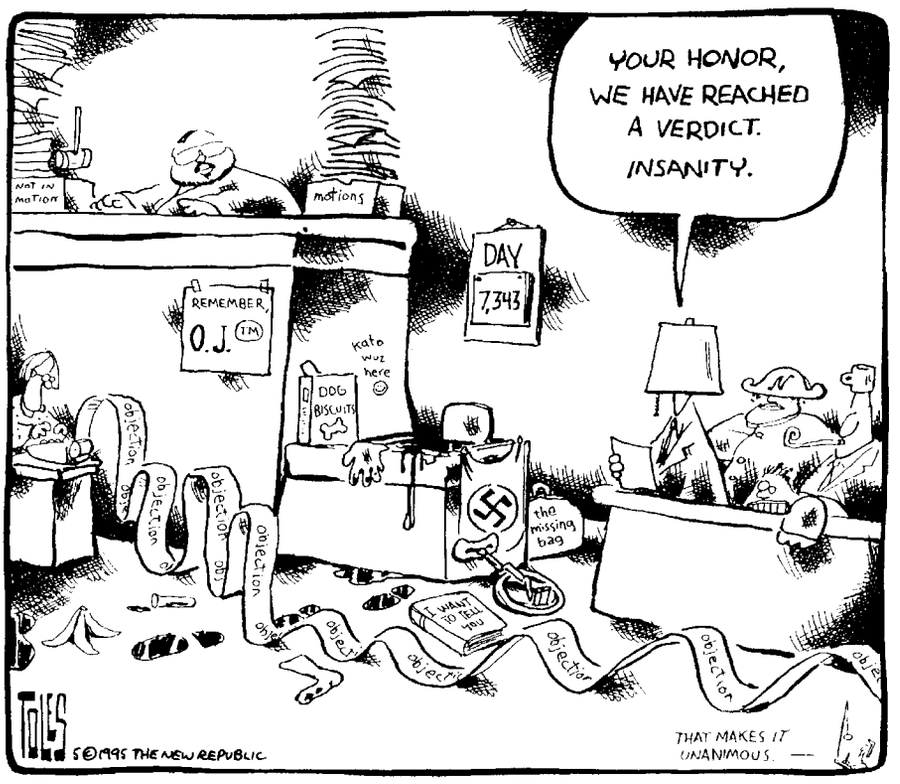
NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: After President Clinton decried a Republican legislative tactic as "basically saying ... you're going to welsh on your debts," the White House issued an apology to Welsh American groups.... British birdwatchers trekked for miles to view the migration of a rare red-necked phalarope, only to witness a giant fish swallow the bird whole.... 110 people polled at the Kansas State Fair in Topeka thought that the Internet was something used in Olympic volleyball matches.... Millionaire presidential candidate Malcolm S. Forbes Jr. recorded in his Princeton yearbook that he wanted to be remembered for "cutting classes," *USA Today* reported. ... "Rockin' the White House: Four Decades of Presidents and Popular Music" is the newest exhibit at the Richard Nixon Library & Birthplace in Yorba Linda, California.... A Huntsville, Alabama, businessman is opening Chain Gang Apparel Inc., which will market clothes patterned after those worn by prisoners on the state's reinstituted chain gangs.



BRINGING THE WAR HOME: On September 27 *The New York Times* reported that two Bosnian women in the United States are suing Radovan Karadzic for war crimes in an American court. This leaves Mr. Karadzic with the problem of finding a lawyer. It would have to be a lawyer who prides himself or herself on the unpopularity, if not the downright vileness, of his or her clients; and William Kunstler is newly dead. But counsel has been retained. "Dr. Karadzic," the *Times* reports, "is represented by Ramsey F. Clark, a former United States Attorney General. Mr. Clark did not return phone calls." Another shining moment for the American left. But Karadzic? Think of it this way. The country that is presently interfering most forcefully in the internal affairs of the Bosnian Serbs is the United States. American bombs have been falling on them. And American bombs, remember, are bad. So stop American imperialism! Let the genocide proceed!

DOUBLE STANDARD: Rupert Murdoch's love-in with the Chinese government continues. *The New York Times* reported this week that Murdoch instructed HarperCollins, which he owns, to withdraw a planned bid to publish Harry Wu's memoirs. Not coincidentally, Murdoch's News Corporation depends upon Beijing's goodwill to runs its lucrative TV operation in China. Murdoch has also, of course, recently entered the beltway magazine business with the conservative *Weekly Standard*. Its editors swear up and down that they have the editorial freedom that an honest journal of opinion demands. So we'll be watching for the *Standard*'s hard-hitting attacks on the communist tyrants in Beijing, and spirited defenses of their ideological soulmates in threatened Taiwan. So, no doubt, will Mr. Murdoch.

POWELL RORSCHACH TEST: "The mere example of an up-by-the-bootstraps black Republican war hero as president could have a broadly conservative cultural effect. And a (presumably) huge victory by Powell, running as a Republican, would expand and solidify the emerging Republican majority."

—William Kristol, *The Weekly Standard*, September 18.

"[Powell's] race, which has never been the focus of his leadership, would probably be a political advantage: it would attract black voters and reassure liberals, and the prejudice it would normally excite elsewhere is largely trumped by his military experience and his background as a high official in Republican administrations."

—Hendrik Hertzberg, *The New Yorker*, September 4.

CORRECTION: Ruth Shalit's October 2 article, "Race in the Newsroom," erroneously reported that Marion Barry supporter Roy Littlejohn "served time for ... corruption." Mr. Littlejohn was neither indicted nor imprisoned. THE NEW REPUBLIC regrets the error and apologizes to Mr. Littlejohn. •

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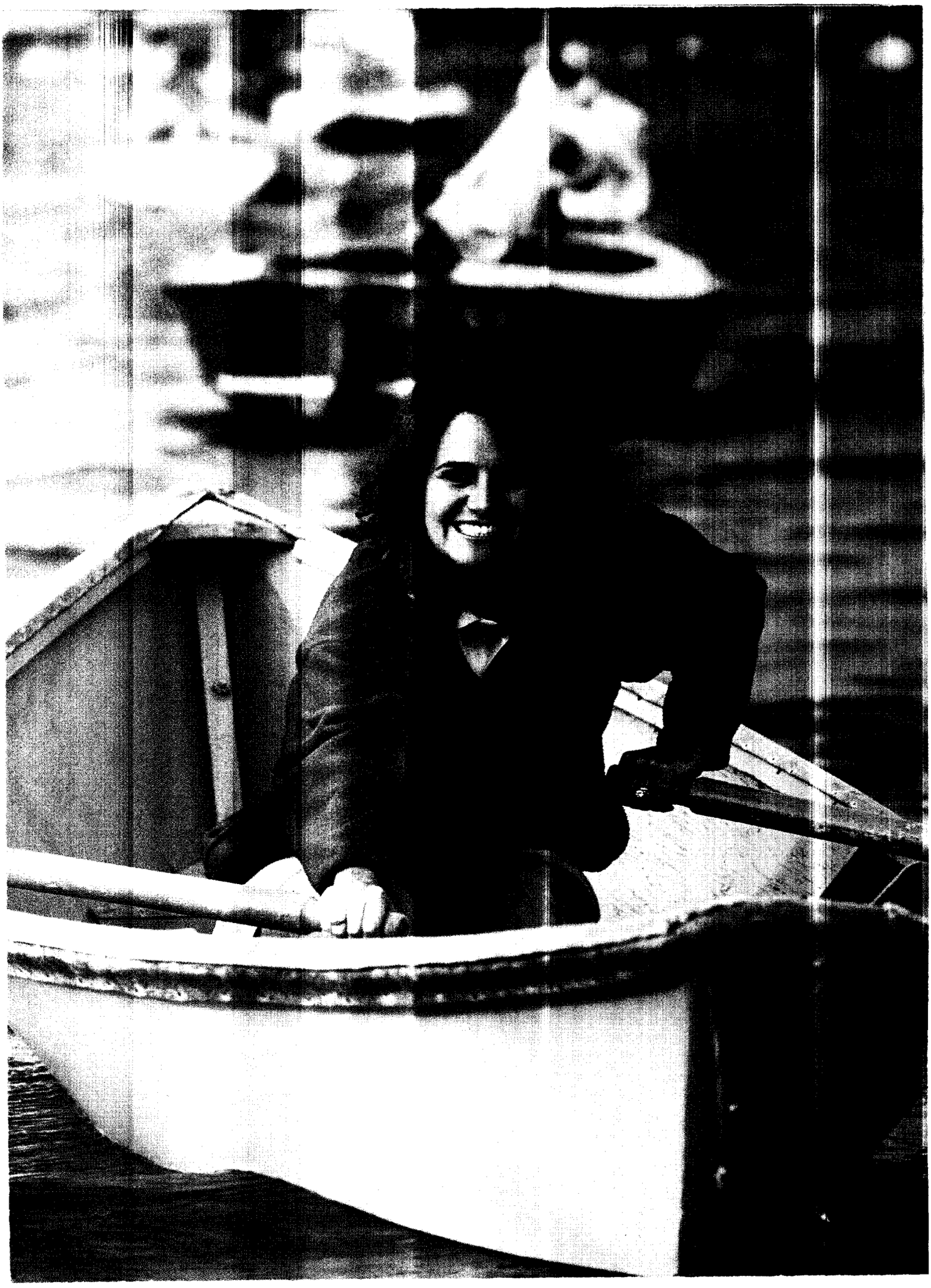

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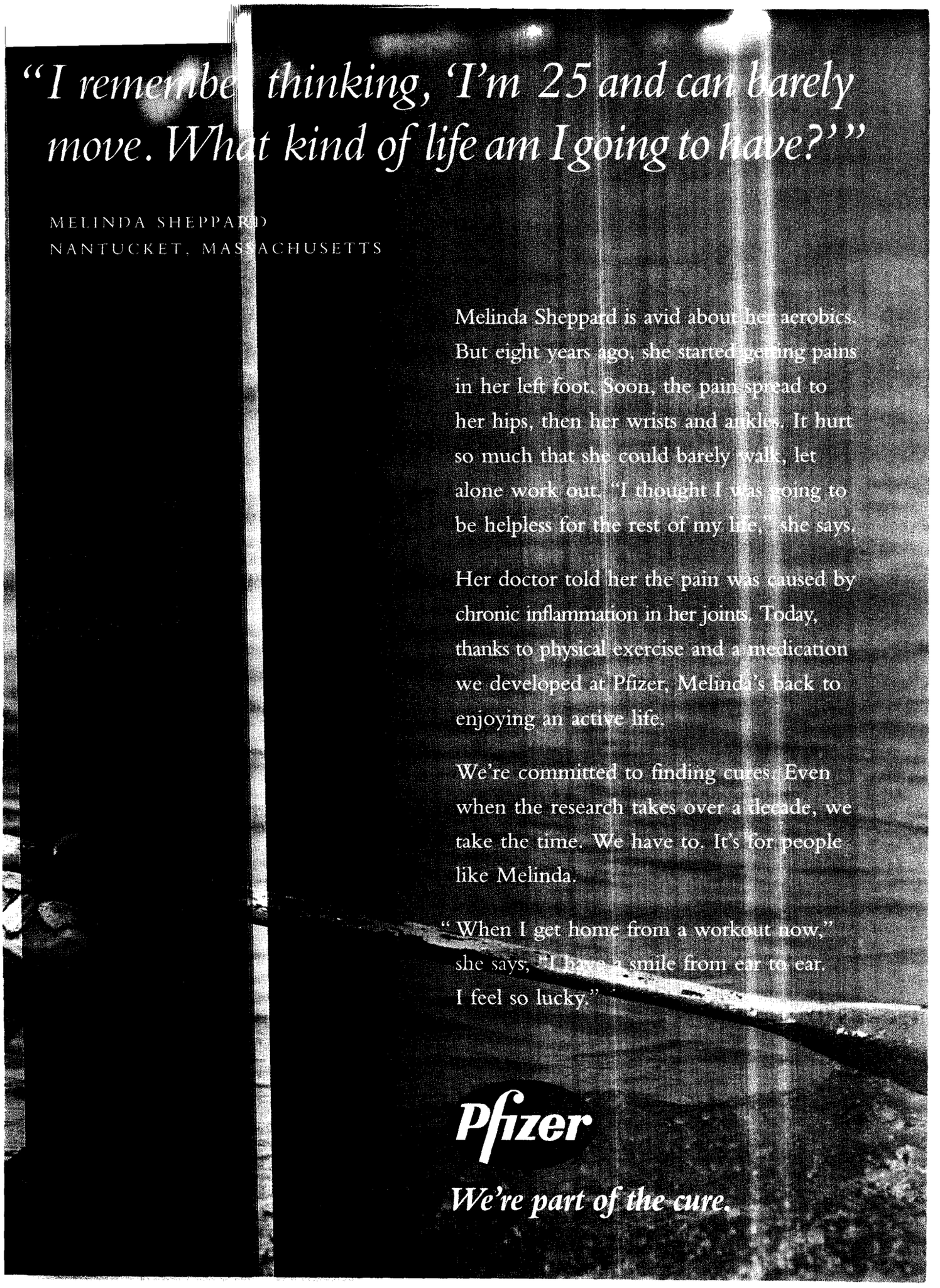
"I remember thinking, 'I'm 25 and can barely move. What kind of life am I going to have?'"
MELINDA SHEPPARD
NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS
Melinda Sheppard is avid about her aerobics. But eight years ago, she started getting pains in her left foot. Soon, the pain spread to her hips, then her wrists and ankles. It hurt so much that she could barely walk, let alone work out. "I thought I was going to be helpless for the rest of my life," she says.
Her doctor told her the pain was caused by chronic inflammation in her joints. Today, thanks to physical exercise and a medication we developed at Pfizer, Melinda's back to enjoying an active life.
We're committed to finding cures. Even when the research takes over a decade, we take the time. We have to. It's for people like Melinda.
"When I get home from a workout now," she says, "I have a smile from ear to ear. I feel so lucky."
Pfizer
We're part of the cure.

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Race in the Newsroom: An Exchange

To the editors:
In her polemic against diversity at *The Washington Post*, Ruth Shalit purports to be concerned that our efforts to diversify our newsroom staff may compromise our journalistic standards. In fact, Shalit's article demonstrates a shameful absence of journalistic standards on the part of THE NEW REPUBLIC and Shalit herself.

She uses the maddening technique of big-lie propaganda to misrepresent how we work in our newsroom and how we cover the news. Fact, falsehood, rumor and quotes wrested out of context are laced together with the author's ideological preconceptions. This presents a misleadingly distorted, single-dimensional view of our complex, competitive, free-wheeling, outspoken newsroom.

Shalit herself signals her own controlling bias when she asserts that "if editors refuse to adjust their traditional hiring standards, they will end up with a nearly all-white staff"—presumably more like that of the magazine for which she works. Her assertion is as unfounded as it is ugly. We have not adjusted standards in any way in our hiring of dozens of talented journalists of color who do distinguished work, and we know we will continue to attract many more of their caliber. Shalit's racial McCarthyism will not deter our efforts to diversify the staff of *The Washington Post* so we can report intelligently on an increasingly diverse community and nation.

The Washington Post has no "goal to reproduce in its building the precise ethnic makeup of its community." Shalit repeatedly uses this straw man to feed the idea that our hiring is being dictated by the numbers, forcing a compromising of standards.

Our stated goal for many years has been to try to have our new hires be 50 percent women and 25 percent minorities, consistent with filling every vacancy with the best-qualified person possible. This has never meant turning away any journalist because he was a white man nor lowering our standards to hire any woman or minority journalist. Our nationally recognized newsroom recruiter, Jeanne Fox-Alston, who was portrayed in a particularly cruel, false light by Shalit, has definitely not been "winnowing out white males," as can be seen from our publicly available newsroom statistics. In the nine years since establishing this goal, we have hired ninety-eight minority staff members in our newsroom, forty-five of them women; at the same time, we have hired 232 whites, 109 of them women.

We emphatically have not "been forced to hire inappropriate people, reporters who lack the skills to do daily newspaper work competently." Many new hires are risky at a newspaper as demanding as *The Washington Post*; the eventual wash-out rate has been no different for minority hires than for whites.

Shalit displays an amateurish inability to get her facts straight. Revealingly, many of these errors could have been corrected if—during her extensive interviews with senior editors of the *Post*—she had asked us or anyone with firsthand knowledge about various unfounded rumors she passed off as facts. Shalit also omitted from her article a large number of interviews with reporters and editors here that conflicted with her point of view. And she juxtaposed quotes from other interviews with statements of her own that were quite different from the questions she asked to obtain the quotes.

Some of her most egregious errors are maliciously hurtful to fine people such as Milton Coleman, who has been our Assistant Managing Editor in charge of Metropolitan News for nearly ten years. Shalit asserts that Ben Bradlee and I had "settled on Kevin Klose" for this job in 1986 (Shalit misdescribes Klose, who was then our Chicago correspondent, as an editor on the National staff). Shalit says Don Graham, the publisher of the *Post*, then intervened to force Ben and me to select Coleman instead. This account is pure fiction. Kevin Klose was never our choice for the job, and the purported conversation with Don Graham that she describes never took place. In fact, in the eleven years since I became managing editor in 1984, Don Graham has never dictated a single newsroom personnel decision (or news coverage decision, for that matter). Ben Bradlee and I selected Milton Coleman ourselves, and remain proud that we did so.

Shalit also slurs Eugene Robinson, our Foreign editor, by suggesting that he was our second choice for the job and implying that we sought him for the position primarily because of his race. She asserts that the Foreign editorship was first offered to our former Cairo correspondent, Caryle Murphy. This is false. No one here ever discussed the job of Foreign editor with Murphy. Gene Robinson—a former city editor here and a distinguished foreign correspondent in Latin America and in London—quickly emerged as the best-prepared person for the job, regardless of race. He was the only person to whom the job was offered.

Shalit has considerable sport at the expense of Doug Farah, our Central American correspondent. She invents from whole cloth a purported meeting where senior editors were described by her as being surprised to discover that Farah was not an Hispanic. No such meeting ever occurred. Here the number of errors is quite breathtaking. Shalit says Farah was born in Bolivia; he was born in Massachusetts. She reports that his family is from Kansas, also incorrect. She claims that the idea of hiring him onto a Metro staff Hispanic-coverage task force was nixed because Farah himself was not Hispanic; in fact, he was hired as our full-time Central American correspondent (after spending several years there as our stringer) one year before the Hispanic task force was even created. She invents a "protracted battle" over whether or not to hire Farah: there was never any question that we would put Farah on the staff after his distinguished service as our stringer in Central America.

Shalit slurs National reporter Kevin Merida, suggesting that he was hired directly onto the National staff because he is black. She describes the National staff as "tiny," but it has nearly fifty reporters. She conjures up a long "waiting list" for membership on the staff; there is no such list. She writes that Merida was jumped ahead of this imaginary queue without being asked to "slug it out at the bottom in Metro"; in fact, we have hired a number of reporters directly from other newspapers onto our National staff. We had been talking to Kevin Merida about joining the National staff since the mid-1980s, while he built a fine reputation as a political reporter for *The Dallas Morning News*, where he covered the White House and national politics before becoming an assistant managing editor in Dallas.

Who is Ruth Shalit and what qualifies her to pass judgment on these fine journalists? The record shows that, in the relatively short time she has been on your staff, she has twice been caught committing plagiarism in the pages of THE NEW REPUBLIC and that a number of her earlier articles have drawn critical letters complaining about numerous inaccuracies.

Shalit's cavalier disregard for facts is really quite astounding—as is THE NEW

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REPUBLIC's willingness to print a story that contains so many errors. Among the many others are: Shalit claims that the National staff is reserving a race-relations reporting job for an African American, when the job was last held by Peter Perl, a white man. She claims applicants were rejected for a job writing about culture in Style because they were "the wrong color," but the only applicant for that position who was actually turned down after extensive interviews was black. She writes that the late Herb Denton joined an EEOC complaint filed by some *Post* reporters in 1972; Denton did not. She writes that there were no black reporters on our Foreign or National staffs "twenty-five years ago"; there were.

Shalit argues in her article that a preoccupation with racial sensitivity here has led us to abandon aggressive reporting on local problems and officials, particularly Washington's mayor, Marion Barry, as though it were some other newspaper that revealed Barry's drug use at a downtown hotel, or some other newspaper that showed how he was manipulating the city's campaign finance laws during the last mayoral election, or some other newspaper that detailed how Barry's Washington home was handsomely remodeled by friends and city contractors, or some other newspaper whose tough coverage (and reporters, many of them black) is currently being attacked at most of their public appearances by both the Mayor and Mrs. Barry.

In particular, Shalit chose to demonize Milton Coleman by accusing him of stopping, stalling or watering down local investigative reporting for racial reasons. This is a preposterous slur against one of our most courageous journalists and effective editors. I have been deeply involved in the editing of most investigative projects here during the time Milton Coleman has been AME for Metropolitan News, and I have seen no evidence of racial attitudes involved in our joint decisions to send various projects back for more reporting and rewriting. We have demanding standards of accuracy, completeness, fairness, clarity and impact that stories must meet before they are published in *The Washington Post* (if only THE NEW REPUBLIC had similar standards), and we have accordingly delayed or abandoned countless stories, regardless of subject, over the years.

Shalit falsely accuses us of adhering to a "commandment to avoid offense at all costs" in any coverage touching on race. Could she be referring to the same newspaper that published Leon Dash's distinguished series on Rosa Lee Cunningham, which both won the Pulitzer Prize and caused very strong emotional responses, both negative and positive, among our black and white readers? Aggressive accountability reporting in all areas is perhaps the single most important part of the mission of this newspaper.

We remain committed to increasing the diversity of our newsroom staff and to publishing the best possible newspaper we can every day. This is not always easy to do under the pressure of daily deadlines in a very competitive atmosphere, which can exacerbate the workplace tensions, racial and other kinds, found in most large offices these days. Reporting on and writing about this challenging situation in a thoughtful, well-informed fashion would be a real contribution to all of our understanding of the dynamics of diversity in American media. It is unfortunate, to say the least, that THE NEW REPUBLIC and Ruth Shalit have instead made the water much muddier.

LEONARD DOWNIE JR.
Executive Editor

Ruth Shalit replies:
Leonard Downie Jr.'s response to my story on racial tensions at the *Post* unwittingly confirms the story's premise: this topic is simply too combustible to talk about honestly and forthrightly.

In his letter and in his public statements about the piece, Mr. Downie has oversimplified my argument and flatly denied that there is any truth—any truth at all—to the substance of what I reported. My story did contain some factual inaccuracies, which I regret, and one serious error not mentioned in Mr. Downie's letter, which is corrected on page 11. With these exceptions, however, none of Mr. Downie's charges can be supported, and I stand behind both the details and the substance of my piece.

I am glad to be corrected by Mr. Downie on matters of historical record. There were a few black reporters on the *Post*'s Foreign and National desks in 1970—two, according to one source, though as of this week, the *Post*'s personnel department was unable to provide exact numbers. In 1972, as I wrote, reporter Leon Dash filed an EEOC complaint against the *Post*, alleging racial discrimination. I wrote that he was joined in his action by other Metro reporters, including Herbert Denton: in fact, Denton did not join in the complaint. Moreover, some biographical information about Central American correspondent Douglas Farah is incorrect. I had written that he was born and raised in Bolivia; in fact, he was born in the United States and moved to Bolivia when he was eighteen months old. Several of Farah's colleagues at the *Post* told me his family was from Kansas. I attempted repeatedly to call Farah in Central America to verify these biographical details, but I was unable, much to my regret, to reach him. Accordingly, I called Peter Harris, an administrative aide on the *Post*'s Foreign staff, who confirmed, erroneously, that Farah was born in Bolivia and that his family was from Kansas. These are the full extent of the factual inaccuracies cited by Mr. Downie; and I regret each of them.

My account of the promotion of Milton Coleman to the job of Assistant Managing Editor for Metropolitan News was based on extensive conversations with sources close to the deliberations, including several of the five finalists for the job of Metro editor. Donald Graham, the publisher of the *Post*, declined to be interviewed for my story, so I was unable to ask him directly to confirm or deny widely circulated accounts that he had handpicked Mr. Coleman for the job. The truth, of course, is known only to Mr. Graham; but I accurately reported the belief of several of the finalists that Mr. Graham had indeed made his wishes known.

The point of my extended discussion of Mr. Coleman, whom I called a "distinguished" and "honorable" journalist, was not, as Mr. Downie suggests, that he was unqualified for his position. I argued instead that in his nine years as Metro editor, Mr. Coleman has repeatedly muted the *Post*'s coverage of Washington's black officials, many of whom are his acquaintances. I backed up this serious charge with many specific examples, including a recent staff meeting at which several high-level *Post* editors confronted Coleman directly about his racial protectiveness. Mr. Downie has no substantive response to any of this, other than to dismiss it as "preposterous."

I did not "slur" Foreign Editor Eugene Robinson, whom I described as "talented" and whom a *Post* staffer quoted in my piece called a "fantastic correspondent," by invoking the politically charged circumstances surrounding his promotion. When Michael Getler was promoted from Assistant Managing Editor for Foreign News to Deputy Managing Editor for Diversity, he was replaced by his deputy, Jackson Diehl, also white. Many *Post* reporters and editors described to me in detail the discomfort this caused the paper's top management; how in filling the job

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of Foreign editor, the job vacated by Diehl, the *Post* was determined not to promote yet a third white male. Several sources told me that Ms. Murphy and the *Post* did indeed hold informal discussions. Again, the point of this anecdote was not to suggest that Mr. Robinson was unqualified for his new job. It was, rather, that by promoting him for cosmetic and political reasons to a management position he didn't want, the paper lost an outstanding and widely praised correspondent.

On the subject of Kevin Merida: the National staff *is* considerably smaller and more exclusive than Metro, which has almost twice as many reporters. Of course there is no formal waiting list, but competition for promotion from Metro to the National desk, is, as Mr. Downie certainly knows, fierce. As for Merida himself: I don't doubt the *Post*'s eagerness to hire this gifted and diligent reporter. Far from slurring Merida, I wrote in my story that his "genuine accomplishments ... [have been] tainted by a preferential system beyond his control." My discussion of Merida's precipitous rise focused primarily on his career at *The Dallas Morning News*, where he advanced from reporter to Assistant Managing Editor in one fell swoop—a vertiginous promotion that caused that "newsroom's anxiety meter [to] jump off the charts," in the words of an article in *American Journalism Review*.

In the course of my reporting, several *Post* reporters described to me Michael Getler's eagerness to determine whether Farah, who grew up in Latin America, was ethnically Hispanic. As I wrote in my piece, Getler at one point confronted Farah directly about his ethnic background. In a recent *Washington Post* article on the controversy, Mr. Getler claimed he had told me, "I don't remember saying this, I don't talk that way." This is false. When I called Mr. Getler before publication to ask whether the incident had, in fact, occurred, he confirmed that it had, and explained why: "There was just an assumption about Doug Farah.... If you met him, you'd assume he was Hispanic. Well, it turns out he's Latino in every way you can think of, except for ethnically." As for my claim that Farah's sponsors tried unsuccessfully to place him on the Latino task force, it was Mr. Getler himself who supplied me with this information: "The idea was that if he came to Washington, he'd be on this newly created Latino task force," he told me. "He'd seemed like a natural person to help cover Hispanic communities up here." My account of the anecdote was correct: Farah was not, in fact, hired onto Metro.

Mr. Downie says that I wrongly describe the race-relations beat and a Style reporting job as reserved for black staffers only. He mentions that the race-relations job was last held by Peter Perl, a white reporter. This is not in dispute. What I reported—accurately—is that the slot has been vacant for several months and that editors have expressed a decided preference for filling it with an African American. As for the Style job, Mr. Downie's claim that a black staffer was turned down for the job after extensive interviews casts no light on whether the job was explicitly set aside for a black staffer, as many white *Post* reporters believed it to be. When I asked Style Editor Mary Hadar whether the position had in fact been reserved for a black reporter, she replied: "We were looking for someone who was very knowledgeable about African American culture. If someone had applied for the job who could write about those issues who was not African American, I might have considered them. I didn't find anybody like that."

In his intemperate attack on my credibility as a reporter, Mr. Downie accuses me of juxtapositions and conflations, of wresting quotes out of context, of omitting interviews that conflict with my point of view. He cites no examples. In fact, I took great pains to quote accurately the many journalists whom I interviewed about this sensitive subject. (The length of my piece was testimony to my interest in the full range of opinion at the paper.) I recorded most of my interviews on tape, and before publication I called every editor quoted in the piece, including Mr. Downie, Mr. Coleman and Mr. Getler, to ask if they had any objection to each quote as recorded. None did.

Mr. Downie misleadingly ascribes to me the contention that in its drive to diversify, the *Post* has "been forced to hire inappropriate people, reporters who lack the skills to do daily newspaper work competently." He is reading sloppily. Those words were presented not as my opinion, but rather as the allegations of some resentful *Post* staffers, whose views I reported as evidence of "resurgent racism" caused in part by an affirmative-action backlash.

Mr. Downie describes my characterization of the *Post*'s hiring policy—what I called a "goal to reproduce in its building the precise ethnic makeup of its community"—a "straw man." My source was Deputy Managing Editor Michael Getler, who explained in a recent report that "The concept of diversity begins with the idea that a newspaper's staff and coverage should reflect the racial, gender and ethnic makeup of its market."

Contrary to Mr. Downie's suggestion, I unstintingly praised the work of individual black reporters such as Leon Dash, whom I described as "brilliant." As I reported, however, Dash's remarkable series on Rosa Lee Cunningham and her family was denounced within the *Post* itself, as Dash's black colleagues condemned the series for reinforcing stereotypes and deplored Dash as a racial traitor.

Finally, I must take strong exception to Mr. Downie's suggestions that I oppose the goal of an integrated newsroom. Much of my argument about the difficulties of minority hiring centered on uncontested statistics documenting the small pool of aspiring minority journalists, a fact cited repeatedly in the *Post*'s internal documents. In my article, I went to great lengths to emphasize that, in order to cover a diverse society, a newspaper needs both a diverse staff and a sympathetic attitude to the idea of diversity. But there is a difference between real diversity and cosmetic diversity, between fairness and ethnic scorekeeping, between sympathetic understanding and a desire to avoid offense at all costs. I tried to document that the *Post*'s efforts to combat real problems of inequality and prejudice have often gone awry, inhibiting the paper's coverage of controversial issues and turning its newsroom into a hothouse of aggrievement and fear.

In the weeks since my article was published, I have been gratified by the support I have received from both white and black reporters at *The Washington Post* and around the country who welcomed the article's attempt to broach, and grapple with, a large and difficult problem and felt that it accurately portrayed one newspaper's failure to acknowledge that its avenue of approach to the problem has had real and troubling costs.

To the editors:
I am very sorry that so many *Washington Post* writers and editors do not meet Ruth Shalit's standards. They do meet mine.

Ms. Shalit makes a series of assertions backed up by a string of blind quotes, to the effect that affirmative action has led the *Post* to compromise its hiring standards and to pull its punches in news coverage. Her evidence is that some journalists in our

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newsroom are willing to grouse about the subject.

Since she works at THE NEW REPUBLIC, the last practitioner of de facto segregation since Mississippi changed, Ms. Shalit has little or no experience in working with black colleagues. But she knows that newsroom second-guessing of any and all editors' decisions is as newsworthy as dog-bites-man. Ms. Shalit even prints a mean attack on our director of hiring and recruiting by people the *Post* has chosen not to hire.

Is the *Post*'s minority staff lacking in talent? Ms. Shalit does not mention that the Pulitzer Prize has been awarded to two African American *Post* staffers in the last two years or that two others were finalists; does not mention the three Polk Awards, an ASNE award for writing, the Livingston award or the White House press photographers awards won by other *Post* minority staffers. Our journalists appear to meet the standards of those award panels. But not Ms. Shalit's.

I have spent a fair amount of time with Len Downie worrying about recent attempts to hire minority *Post* staffers by *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Dallas Morning News*, Knight-Ridder, ABC, *The New Yorker* and *Sports Illustrated*, among many others (not, of course, THE NEW REPUBLIC, which I am told has never had a full-time black staffer). Our staffers seem to meet the standards of those publications. But not Ms. Shalit's.

I've watched *Post* editors hire reporters for a few years now. There are more truly outstanding reporters on the *Post* today, both sexes, all races, than there ever have been in the history of the paper. The *Post* does try hard to find minority reporters and editors. It tries to hire only excellent reporters, succeeds in many cases, and fails about as often with whites as with blacks, Hispanics and Asians.

Evaluations of individual reporters are necessarily subjective. But when it comes to news coverage, Ms. Shalit can be examined. She finds our coverage of Marion Barry since his release from prison "more uncritical than before." Really, Ms. Shalit? Did you see the ten to twelve editorials opposing his re-election? Did you see Colbert King's op-ed page columns, since the election? Did you see the *Post* editorials with headlines like "MAYOR BARRY'S RECKLESS THREATS," "'WHAT CRISIS IN D.C.,' HE ASKS," "VICTORY FOR THE LAW OF THE STREETS" and "MELTDOWN"? Did you see the piece that launched the current grand jury investigation? Or the pieces from our city staff with headlines like "AUTHORITIES SEIZE FILES ON BARRY," "BARRY BRUSHES ASIDE QUESTIONS; MAYOR WALKS OUT WHEN ASKED ABOUT TIES TO BUSINESSMEN," "BARRY'S SECURITY COSTS ANGER D.C. COUNCIL," "RESIDENTS TRASH TRIP BY BARRY," "BARRY DENIES STEEP DISCOUNT ON HOTEL SUITE WAS ILLEGAL GIFT" and on and on.

Among honest people, evaluations of the same set of facts will differ. A reporter who claims to evaluate the *Post*'s Barry coverage and leaves out all the articles I have mentioned is not an honest reporter.

I am mentioned in Ms. Shalit's piece only briefly: she alleges that I overruled Ben Bradlee and Len Downie to make Milton Coleman the Assistant Managing Editor for Metropolitan News. This is fantasy. I wasn't asked for my opinion and didn't give it. I would be proud if I had selected Milton Coleman, who has put together what I consider an outstanding Metro staff by (yes) particularly careful hiring. Ms. Shalit accuses Mr. Coleman of pulling his punches in coverage of black leaders, including Louis Farrakhan. The reason Ms. Shalit has heard Mr. Farrakhan's name is that he became nationally famous for threatening Milton Coleman's life over Coleman's coverage of the Jesse Jackson campaign of 1984. As I learned in 1984, Milton Coleman is one of the bravest people I've ever met. A choice between his standards and Ms. Shalit's would be my easiest call, any day of the week.

Ms. Shalit describes a place where blacks and whites watch each other closely, where race becomes an excuse for some and a flashpoint for others. Sounds like America in 1995. Except, of course, for THE NEW REPUBLIC. (Motto: Looking for a qualified black since 1914.)

The Washington Post will go on trying to hire the best reporters we can, and will go on trying to identify and hire outstanding minority journalists. When Ms. Shalit alleges low standards, my answer is: J.A. Adande, Louis Aguilar, David Aldridge, John Anderson, Marie Arana-Ward, Juana Arias, Nora Boustany, Donna Britt, Dudley Brooks, Warren Brown, DeNeen Brown, Stephen Buckley, Ruben Castaneda, Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Deirdre Childress, Kenneth Cooper, Leon Dash, Marcia Davis, Lynne Duke, Gabriel Escobar, Louis Estrada, Anthony Faiola, Michael Fletcher, John Fountain, Lisa Frazier, Mary Ann French, Patrice Gaines, Dorothy Gilliam, Robin Givhan, Malcolm Gladwell, Hamil Harris, Craig Herndon, Spencer Hsu, Desson Howe, Keith Jenkins, Jon Jeter, Colbert King, Athelia Knight, Gary Lee, Nathan McCall, Kevin Merida, Courtland Milloy, David Nakamura, Ellen Nakashima, Terry Neal, David Nicholson, Lan Nguyen, Lonnae O'Neal Parker, Peter Pae, Phillip Pan, Robert Pierre, Carol Porter, Rudy Pyatt, William Raspberry, Keith Richburg, Michelle Singletary, Marcia Slacum-Greene, Lena Sun, Pierre Thomas, Avis Thomas-Lester, Jacqueline Trescott, Eric Wee, Michael Wilbon, Daniel Williams, Juan Williams, Yolanda Woodlee and John Yang. I cite only reporters, columnists, photographers and artists because readers may judge their work for themselves. I am proud to have *The Washington Post* judged by their work.

DONALD GRAHAM
Publisher

The editors reply:

Donald Graham's wild accusation that THE NEW REPUBLIC is "the last practitioner of de facto segregation since Mississippi changed" is as outrageous as it is revealing. For decades, TNR has been a vital defender of traditional civil rights, attacked first from the racist right and now from the race-obsessed left. Our commitment today is simply to the best, bravest, clearest opinion journalism there is, regardless of the ethnicity, gender, race or sexual orientation of the author. We do not engage in the percentage-mongering and literal racial quotas of the *Post* (although over the years we have published many brilliant minority writers, who need not wonder, as some do at the *Post*, if they are the beneficiaries of special treatment). Nor do we publish crude, racist, one-sided articles about a subject as complex and difficult as affirmative action. Shalit's 13,000-word article was a model of nuance, balance and fair-mindedness. We urge readers exposed to the *Post*'s hysterics to reread this careful piece to see the truth of the matter. The attack upon Shalit herself is particularly low. If Downie believed Shalit was unqualified to write the article, why did he agree to talk with her at such length or cooperate in such detail? The "plagiarism" charges have been dealt with—and apologized for—in TNR's pages and, together, concern a total of six sentences transcribed accidentally from Nexis. There is no other reason to revisit that matter other than to distract from the story itself. The extremity of the response is suggestive of one thing only: that the article was dead-on in its portrayal of an institution compromised by well-meaning, but over-reaching, attempts at racial engineering. The rest of the world can see this. When, we wonder, will Downie and Graham come out of denial? •

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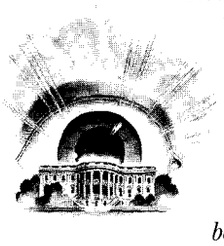
A BRONX TALE

By Matthew Cooper

If Colin Powell runs for president, it could be great for the country—especially for blowhards like me. Political reporters hate the thought of a bland Clinton-Dole race and Powell's entry would be a reason to get up in the morning. But, as much as I hope Powell runs (and for all the serious reasons, too), I fret that, alas, he won't.

And that leads to an interesting thought: If Powell doesn't run and he's looking, as he says, for a way to serve the country, what else could he do? International negotiator? Naah, Carter's got that one covered. TV talking head? Pitting Eisenhower's heir against Charlie Rose doesn't seem quite right.



Let me suggest another option: New York City Schools Chancellor. At first blush the idea sounds laughable, absurd. Though Rudy Giuliani actually tossed around Powell's name earlier this year, citing him as the kind of person he'd want for the job, getting the genuine article seemed too fantastic to take seriously. For his part, Powell, through a spokesperson, playfully demurred. No doubt, the schools chancellor job felt too small, too mired in racial matters for a man famous for busting stereotypes. If Powell has a theme let it be "Hail to the Chief," not "To Sir, With Love."

And yet, the job's still open ... and urban school systems remain in free fall, despite occasional upticks. Drugs and illegitimacy, international competitiveness and race-relations—all are made worse by systems such as New York's where a million students, 83 percent minority, are pummeled by problems as notorious as they are onerous: bureaucracy, guns, work rules. This is not a local problem. It is the great national mission.

Giuliani recognizes the problem, sort of. His first pick for the job—Richard Ravitch—made sense. Ravitch, a burly ex-banker, ran the New York subways in the '80s, erasing the graffiti and installing the air conditioning. He didn't turn the A-train into the Orient Express, but he did prove that big public institutions, like their private counterparts—Chrysler and IBM, Ford and GM—aren't helpless, pitiful giants. Ravitch ducked on the chancellor's job, though. It's unworkable, he said. He's probably right. New York's Board of Education system is the worst of all worlds: it's crony-ridden without the responsiveness of old-time, ward-heeling politics. It's got all the airs of professionalism, minus the standards. Since Ravitch backed out in September the usual suspects, dull educators all, have topped the candidate lists. A recent front-runner, Leon Goldstein, president of Kingsborough Community College, a candidate who is palatable to Giuliani, is faltering, caught in a dispute with the Board of Education president. Even if he prevails, no one expects him to inspire.

Powell is Ravitch, only better. After all, Powell's military, as is frequently noted, has shown that it can take teens—usually of humble means, often troubled—and make them responsible enough to man missiles. The Army model isn't a cure, but in a city riven by race, its brand of multiculturalism is instructive. The Army's race-conscious affirmative action helped Powell get his stars. But its emphasis on standards and training discourages griping about "incompetents." It is, as sociologist Charles Moskos has said, the only place in society where blacks regularly tell whites what to do.

Powell is also a New Yorker, a son of the boroughs. Born in the Bronx, he could speak for Astoria's Greeks, Flatbush's Trinidadians, Staten Island's angry white males and the working-class families who want a system that educates instead of wastes time on the cultural disputes more likely to excite Manhattanites. (Remember the flap over gay-themed children's books like *Daddy's Roommate*?) Generationally, as well as temperamentally, Powell is cut for this cloth. At 58, he's old enough to remember a safer New York, what Alan Ehrenhalt in his new book on 1950s Chicago calls *The Lost City*. And he's young enough, as Powell writes in his memoirs, to have seen a heroin overdose. "He would not be the last," Powell writes. Raised in the *Blackboard Jungle*-era, he can relate to *Clockers*.

Obviously, Powell can't do it alone. The state legislature, which has a big hand in the system, would have to bow to reform. Charter schools, vouchers, scholarships, single-sex academies—a thousand flowers would have to bloom to find out what's worth cultivating. And there's an obvious character flaw I'm loathe to acknowledge. Powell, a get-along guy, is an unlikely revolutionary. Still, the hope is that the system might so offend Powell's sense of discipline and, well, hometown pride that he'd be propelled. The general would have to part with his Powell Doctrine, too. Victory is not assured, not even with overwhelming force.

If the idea of delving into education still seems silly, remember Ross Perot's example, good and bad. Perot squandered his capital after 1992—ranting about NAFTA, achieving little. (We'll see how this new party works out.) How much better it would have been had Perot done for the country in the '90s what he did for Texas in the '80s, when he convinced the football-crazed state to adopt the no pass/no play requirement. And for Powell, there's an edu-parallel with Eisenhower. When he left the military, Ike took up the cozy sinecure of running New York's Columbia University; Powell could do him one better, taking Gotham's tougher chancellor job. It wouldn't be good for us political reporters. But for my country, I'm willing to make the supreme sacrifice. •

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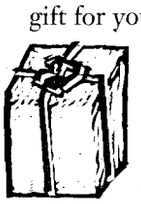

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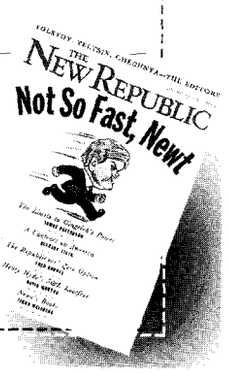

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NATIONAL INSECURITY

A SOLDIER'S STORY

By Charles Lane

Colin Powell's instant best-seller memoir, *My American Journey*, has been hailed as an inspirational personal saga and perused for clues about the general's political ambitions. Much has been made of Powell's tidbits about high-level job offers from Presidents Clinton and Bush. Less, however, has been said about a more substantive question: What does Powell reveal about the origin, and the validity, of his all-or-none "Powell Doctrine" on the use of force?

Thanks to *My American Journey*, it is now clearer than ever that Powell's disdain for what he considers "limited" or "half-baked" military efforts stems from the corruption and waste of human life he saw on his second tour in Vietnam during 1968 and 1969. Though he wasn't in Vietnam at the time, he calls the massacre of civilians by Americal troops at My Lai "an appalling example of much that had gone wrong." He is withering on the body counts and other "euphemisms, lies, and self-deception[s]" that dominated the Army culture of the time. "A corrosive careerism had infected the Army," he concedes, "and I was part of it."

Powell's fiercest condemnation, however, is reserved for the civilian government, which sent the Army to war in the first place. Careerist Army officers may have faked body counts but only because they were under "Pentagon pressure" to show results. Powell exudes contempt for the "McNamara shop" in Washington and its wonder weapons such as Agent Orange. He implies that My Lai, too, was an indirect result of the civilians' failure to define a quickly obtainable objective. The war dragged on so long, he writes, that the Army had run out of qualified leaders to provide judgment and discipline "as the troops became numb to what appeared to be endless and mindless slaughter."

In the decades after Vietnam, Powell and his colleagues did much to modernize the weapons, training and doctrine of the armed forces and to raise the all-volunteer force's morale. But, as Powell's reminiscences imply, the main "lesson" they learned in Vietnam had to do with the balance of power within American democracy. The Army got burned for failing to confront its constitutionally decreed civilian masters with the error of their ways. "Just as I came to re-examine my feelings about the war," Powell writes, "the Army, as an institution, would do the same thing. We accepted that we had been sent to pursue a policy that had become bankrupt." Powell's generation of officers, however, "vowed that when our turn came to call the shots, we would not quietly acquiesce in halfhearted warfare for half-baked reasons that the American people could not understand or support."

This account of what went wrong in Vietnam and who, at bottom, was responsible is by now conventional wisdom in the U.S. military. And, to be sure, even Robert McNamara no longer defends Robert McNamara. President Johnson's refusal to raise taxes to pay for Vietnam, or to abolish college draft deferments, did sap the country's sense of national mission and skew the national debate. And the military was reined in by Washington's concern that an all-out assault on North Vietnam might provoke Russia or China into the war.

Yet for all the validity of these points and for all of Powell's soul-searching, he lets his own institution off a bit too easily. Take My Lai. Yes, the platoon leader who ordered the massacre, Lieutenant William L. Calley, was a college dropout who should not have been commissioned—and might not have been if the war hadn't dragged on, or if more Strobe Talbotts and Bill Clintons had been available. But Calley's platoon was not "numbed"; My Lai was its first big mission. Furthermore, all of Calley's superiors were career Army officers with distinguished records. The real question, which Powell sidesteps, is not how Calley could have ordered the crime but how so many officers and gentlemen above him could have turned a blind eye, or even filed false reports about it.

Powell's discussion of My Lai segues into a discussion of the Americal Division's "Military-Age Male" policy, or "MAM." As Powell explains, if a helicopter spotted any Vietnamese who looked remotely old enough to be a Viet Cong guerrilla, the Americans fired in front of him as a warning to halt and await arrest. Any movement by the suspect—"evasion," in the argot of the day—was a sign of hostile intent and allowed you to shoot to kill. Powell concedes this sounds "brutal" but notes that a buddy was killed by a sniper while observing MAMs. "The kill-or-be-killed nature of combat tends to dull fine perceptions of right and wrong," Powell observes.

Well, yes. But a truism hardly settles the issue. Rules of engagement which sound perfectly logical in the pages of Powell's book were no doubt less comprehensible to those Vietnamese who found themselves set upon in their rice paddies by airborne gunners. Many were killed when they quite understandably fled in panic. The MAM policy was easy to abuse—"gook hunting" became a kind of sport for some frustrated Americans.

Besides, not everyone in the Americal agreed that MAM was defensible—at least not as practiced by some officers. On June 2, 1971, the Army's criminal division lodged murder charges against General John W. Donaldson, the former Americal division chief of staff with whom Powell worked closely for eight months. The case was based on sworn complaints from Donaldson's own

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helicopter pilots to the effect that Donaldson, without provocation, had shot and killed six unarmed Vietnamese civilians from the air in late 1968 and early 1969.

It's surprising Powell doesn't explore this case, since it was front-page news at the time, and since Powell himself helped his former boss's defense. In Communist-dominated Quang Ngai province, Powell wrote in an affidavit for Donaldson on August 10, 1971, helicopter-borne arrests were an "effective means of separating hostiles from the general population." Without commenting on the specific charges, Powell hailed the defendant as "an aggressive and courageous brigade commander," devoted to minimizing U.S. casualties. An Army general who reviewed the case agreed and ordered the charges dropped without trial. But the scandal did drive Donaldson into premature retirement.

Neither My Lai nor the problematic MAM policy can be chalked up entirely to civilian error, or even to the eternal barbarism of warfare, as Powell seems to imply. They were also instances of a failing the Army shared with the government: the inability to come to grips with the revolution in modern warfare that had been ushered in by the Second World War. The bombing of cities, the advent of nuclear weapons and the spread of guerrilla wars of national liberation assured, in different ways, that wars would henceforth be "total" affairs; the line that military orthodoxy attempts to draw between combatants and non-combatants would be forever blurred.

In the Vietnam war, the objective of the government—to expel the North Vietnamese Army from South Vietnam—was not as inherently ambiguous as the military's post hoc analyses suggest. Rather, U.S. goals became clouded at the tactical level by the increasing mismatch between the objective and the strategy, attrition, that the Army adopted to meet it. Attrition was chosen by the Army—not imposed by civilians—as a kind of reflexive resort to the grind-'em-down formula it had employed in World War II and Korea. Some military men, especially from services other than the Army, recognized that it wouldn't work, and said so. As early as 1965, General Victor "Brute" Krulak of the Marine Corps advocated de-emphasizing search-and-destroy missions in favor of harder strikes into North Vietnam coupled with defter, small-unit operations and political work in the South. McNamara, and the Army brass, declined to change course.

Today's U.S. military has abandoned attrition. The Gulf war showed that the Army, with its high-tech equipment and its new doctrine emphasizing violent, fast-paced maneuver, can defeat another conventionally arrayed armed force, and do so within the narrow tolerance for prolonged war and heavy loss of life that the Vietnam generation of officers assumes to be inherent in American democracy. This constitutes great progress.

But it does not necessarily mean the armed forces have overcome the attachment to orthodoxy that had so much to do with the failure in Vietnam. Rather, the Gulf may have been the exception that proves the rule: one of the few strategic arenas in the world where military conflict is likely to take the preferred, straightforward form of two armies in collision. Bosnia is arguably the more apposite case. It has demonstrated that the U.S. Army is still hamstrung when asked to come up with ways to achieve the country's political goals in a more unorthodox, Vietnam-like setting.

For such conflicts, the Powell Doctrine offers only one answer: "We do deserts, we don't do mountains." The Powell Doctrine hinges, therefore, not only on a revised vision of military tactics but also on a different, and constitutionally questionable, relationship between the soldier and the state. It seems to be a relationship in which, through a variety of formal and informal means, professional military officers are able to exercise more influence—some might call it veto power—over the policy decisions of civilians. Certainly officers must speak up when they feel their orders will lead to failure. Yet My Lai and other disasters in Vietnam showed that unelected Army officers, working within a hierarchical bureaucracy of their own, are not necessarily endowed with more courage, or honesty, or better political judgment, than their civilian bosses. Not even the post-Vietnam reforms Powell and others carried out could change that basic human reality. •

Germany's newfound strength.

SPRINGTIME

By Jacob Heilbrunn

When CIA Director John Deutch traveled to Bonn this summer to meet with his German counterpart, Bernd Schmidbauer, the visit soon turned unexpectedly sour. Throughout the cold war American agents had the run of the Federal Republic, and relations between the two secret services—the CIA had created Germany's equivalent agency in the aftermath of World War II—could not have been cozier. No longer. Schmidbauer told Deutch that he would combat American efforts at economic espionage and demanded that the United States, like Russia, begin reducing the number of its agents stationed in Germany.

This episode was just the latest indication that, since 1989, official German-American relations have been based on a comforting myth. That myth, tirelessly peddled by Clinton administration officials such as former ambassador to Germany Richard Holbrooke, holds that ties between the two countries are bound to remain as harmonious following as during the cold war. In fact, united Germany and the United States are being driven inexorably apart by new geopolitical realities.

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Far from remaining a dutiful ally of the United States, Germany is becoming a competitive state that relies on its secret service and a nexus of economic links, including a new Berlin-Beijing axis, to advance its own interests as a European great power. At the heart of the new German assertiveness is the consummation of a strategic shift from world power to money power, from *Weltpolitik* to *Geldpolitik*. The result is the emergence of a Germany that can say no.

Germany's role as a revisionist power intent on maximizing its economic prowess abroad is not simply a product of the fall of the Berlin Wall. It has its origins in the 1970s détente with the East. In Germany, far more than in the United States, economic exchange with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was viewed as a potent political weapon that would amplify Germany's political influence and avert another war in Europe. Under the leadership of Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the foreign minister and head of the liberal Free Democratic Party, Germany steadily expanded its ties with Eastern Europe and went on to pursue a course as a trading power that could penetrate markets around the globe by keeping pace with high-technology advances in Japan and the United States. This strategy helped transform Germany into the third-biggest economy and the second-biggest exporter in the world, with every third German job dependent on exports.

With the end of the cold war the ante has been upped, and the Germans scent far greater possibilities. In part this is the consequence of the Clinton administration's willingness to hand over to Germany responsibility for Europe's struggling "other half." (As Clinton said last year in Bonn, he hopes Germany will make "a more aggressive effort to solve the problems within Europe.") But regardless of the Clinton administration, German officials such as Defense Minister Volker Rühe are already talking in sweeping terms of protecting German economic interests around the globe; thus, Germany's 1994 defense white paper emphasized access to markets and raw materials abroad as one of Germany's "vital interests," announcing what was, in effect, a redefinition of German military policy in economic terms.

Germany's more immediate interest, though, is in maintaining stability on its eastern borders and in transforming the European Union (EU) into a vehicle for German interests. To this end, Germany has sought to create its own sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe, which will form a market for German goods and provide cheap labor. On a recent visit to the Baltic states, Rühe was courted like a head of state, for the Baltics rightly see German sponsorship as the key to their admission into NATO and the EU. German factories are already relocating to Poland, and German businessmen see the Baltic states, especially Estonia, the economic shooting star of the region, as profitable areas in their own right as well as launching grounds for the Russian market.

Germany made the boldest declaration of its European strategy last fall with a policy document titled "Reflections on European Policy" by a Christian Democratic (CDU) parliamentary group. Released with the tacit permission of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the proposal called for the creation of a five-country core group—France, Germany and the Benelux—to drive unity through on a fast track, while the other members of the union would proceed at a slower pace. All European Union policy would be made by the core members. The document warned that, should this proposal be spurned, "Germany could be required, or as a result of its own security needs, tempted, to ensure the stability of Eastern Europe alone and by traditional means."

The region in which the German drive for domination has so far been most apparent—and damaging—is the Balkans. Both secretaries of state James Baker and Warren Christopher condemned Bonn for triggering the Yugoslav crisis by prematurely recognizing Slovenian and Croatian independence in December 1991. The truth is more complicated: Bonn's misstep in the Balkans shows how clumsy its foreign policy can be when it leaves the economic sphere. Anxious to do *something* about Serb atrocities against the Muslims, then-Foreign Minister Genscher made the naïve calculation that German recognition of new borders would suffice to prevent the Serbs from carving up Bosnia. Instead, he merely fanned the flames that had fueled the war in the first place.

The German willingness to deploy military personnel in Yugoslavia and the German push to ensure stability in Eastern Europe have been welcomed by the Clinton administration. After all, a more assertive Germany can assume some of the burdens of defense and of economic aid that the U. S. shouldered in the past. Yet, however tempting that prospect, it has serious drawbacks.

German economic dominance of Europe not only impinges on the ability of America to export to Europe, it also reveals the extent to which American economic policy has become hostage to the tight money policy of the German Bundesbank. The D-mark has become the world's second-largest reserve currency. Both the German finance ministry and the Bundesbank are drawing up plans to back a future European currency with a German gold cover of 25 percent. "As German economic power and influence increase," writes Richard Smyser in his recent book *Germany and America*, "the capacity of the American government and of the Federal Reserve to manipulate U.S. demand cycles will be materially diminished."

Another area of competition with the United States is the aerospace industry. Wolfgang Piller, the president of the federal board of the German aerospace industry, recently called on Germany to adopt the kind of protectionist measures the United States has. Noting that the 1993 defense bill required the president to report to Congress on foreign company mergers that involve national security, Piller demanded that the EU protect European industry and end the trade imbalance between Europe and the United States in aerospace.

If a German-dominated European Union poses a

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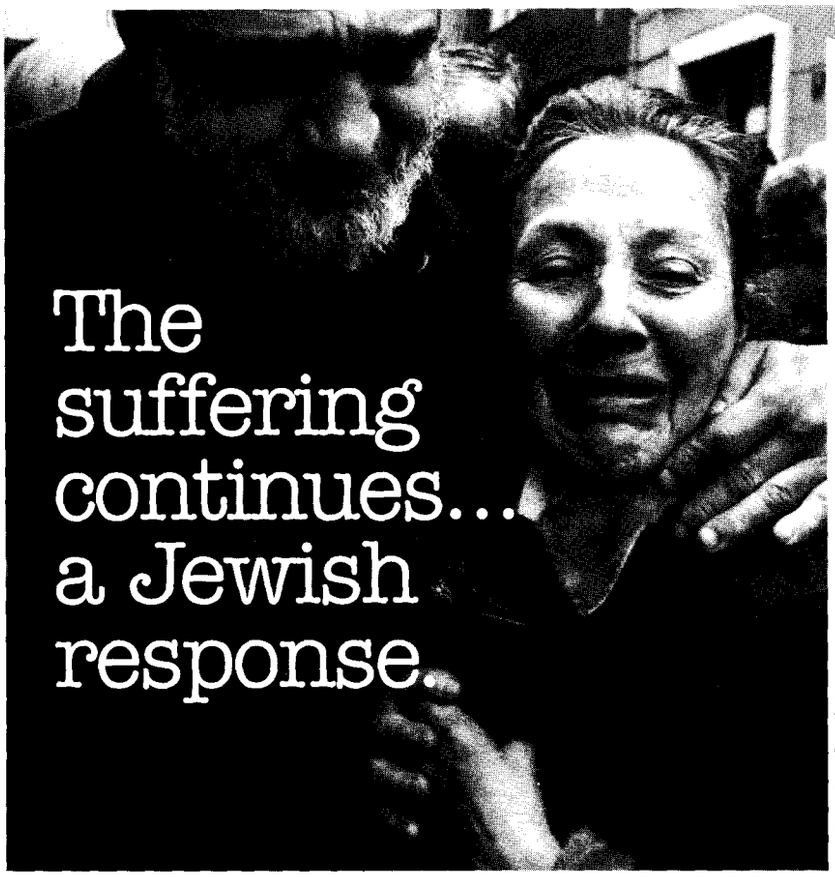
An Appeal To American Jews



The suffering continues... a Jewish response.

Edward Serotta / Central Europe Center

Hundreds of thousands of people continue to suffer in the former Yugoslavia. Families seek warm shelter as another harsh winter approaches. In war-torn Bosnia there is devastation and hopelessness.

Our history and tradition require that we not ignore the desperate cries for help from those suffering in the former Yugoslavia.

Although headlines may change, the human suffering continues.

In response to these tragic events in Bosnia, over 30 national Jewish organizations have come together to create the Jewish Coalition for Bosnian Relief. The Coalition has launched an effort to provide desperately needed food, medicine, shelter, clothing and other humanitarian assistance to those suffering from the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. These projects will be administered by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).

Since the beginning of the devastation in the former Yugoslavia, JDC has been in the forefront of the effort to supply humanitarian aid, delivering assistance without regard to race, religion or political affiliation. Working with La Benevolencia, the one hundred year-old Jewish welfare society of Sarajevo, JDC evacuated over 2,100 Moslem, Christian, and Jewish women, children, and elderly from Sarajevo during the heart of the siege.

Despite deadly civil war, treacherous roads, and hundreds of armed checkpoints, JDC's relief efforts have continued.

Many tons of food, clothing and medicine have been provided to suffering civilians throughout the former Yugoslavia. Aid donated by European governments and international relief agencies, including Moslem and Christian organizations, has been delivered through the JDC - La Benevolencia lifeline into Sarajevo.

In fact, throughout the crisis, JDC has supplied La Benevolencia with medicines and operates free pharmacies in Sarajevo, which have provided up to half of all the pharmaceuticals available in the city.

Bosnian refugees of all faiths and ethnic origins are now being assisted, many for a second time since World War II. Sick, frightened and anxious about tomorrow, they depend on the generosity of the international community for their survival.

In turn, the Jewish Coalition for Bosnian Relief depends on you. **In this season of reflection and renewal, let us reach into our collective memory and reach out to these people.**

As over 30 Jewish organizations join together for a common cause, we urge you to support our efforts. Your assistance can mean the difference between life and death.

Facts about the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

Founded in 1914, in recent years the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, with the help of the Jewish people, has mounted major non-sectarian relief efforts throughout the world, including Armenia, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Kurdistan, Lebanon, Mexico, Rwanda, Somalia, and Zimbabwe.

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potential threat to American interests, Germany's role in the Middle East poses an actual one. To be sure, Germany shares with the United States many of the same concerns in the region—notably, a commitment to the state of Israel.

It does not, however, share all our interests. Germany is intent, for example, on preserving its status as one of the world's leading arms exporters and has directed funds to so-called C-3-I technologies—command, communication, control and intelligence—which supply the basis for the futuristic weaponry that began to make its mark on the battlefield during the Gulf war.

But Germany's hopes for the Middle East go far beyond merely supplying the region with advanced weaponry. Just as Bonn viewed itself as a broker between East and West during the cold war, so it views itself today as the bridge between the Middle East and the West. Germany is now the second-biggest supplier of aid to Egypt, and it has begun to reduce its direct subventions to Israel in order to become a chief donor to the Palestinian National Authority, particularly in the area of water projects. To punish Israel for sounding the alarm about Iranian ambitions in the region, Bonn has also reduced its extensive cooperation with Israel in nuclear weapons development. Bonn, which seeks to cultivate all the powers in the region, regards the American policy of attempting to fence off Iran and Iraq as dangerously naïve. The German belief, championed most notably by Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, is that cooperation rather than confrontation will convince the Iranian mullahs to deal with the West.

Germany's long-standing involvement with Iran and Iraq poses a particular problem for the United States. German dealings with Iraq go back as far as 1977, when German companies began to build chemical weapons plants and went on to help build up the Iraqi nuclear program. Indeed, though the Bush administration hardly shrank from coddling Saddam, Germany has always been in bed with the Iraqis. It continues to seek business deals with Iraq; in June an Iraqi Foreign Ministry delegation held a series of talks with representatives of the German foreign office and met with a number of leading industrialists to discuss new business ties between the two countries. In addition, Iraq has identified Germany as a potential supplier for machine tools that can manufacture components such as centrifuges and isotope separation for nuclear reactions.

Iraq is not the only Middle Eastern country Bonn traffics with. Germany maintains extensive ties with Iran as well, having snubbed repeated appeals from the Clinton administration to help maintain the trade embargo against it. Instead, Bonn remains eager to sign deals with Teheran to supply high technology and military hardware. It even appears that German industrialists have been supplying Libya once more with the capability to build poison-gas plants. According to *Stern* magazine the Stuttgart entrepreneur Hans-Joachim Rose has created three front companies in India to funnel chemical weapons technology to Libya, which is building a new poison-gas factory in underground bunkers fifty miles southwest of Tripoli.

This kind of D-Mark diplomacy has informed Germany's approach not only to the Middle East but to the Far East as well. In the 1980s Germany began to target for investment the newly industrializing countries in Southeast Asia—Malaysia and Singapore in particular. But the real plum for the Germans, as for the rest of the West, is China.

Germany has by far the closest relations of any European power with China, and, so far, it has allowed nothing to roil them. Only a few days after the Tiananmen Square massacre in June, 1989, a cavalcade of high-ranking Chinese intelligence service officers pulled up at the headquarters of the federal intelligence service in Pullach, near Munich. The federal service gave the Chinese information on organizations run by Chinese exiles living in Germany in exchange for permission to develop listening facilities at the Chinese-Soviet border. According to German press accounts, the Germans also gave the go-ahead to the Munich company Rohde and Schwarz to sell millions of D-Marks' worth of electronic equipment to the Chinese, including "Direction-Finding System PA 055" antenna systems, which are used to keep diplomats and dissidents under surveillance.

Since then, relations between the two countries have steadily become warmer. In 1993 Chancellor Helmut Kohl initiated an "Asia offensive" that was supposed to more closely link government and industry efforts to penetrate the Asian market. German exports to China went from 5.7 billion D-Marks in 1992 to 10.2 billion in 1994, and China has become one of Germany's most important trading partners; it now ranks eleventh as a supplier and fifteenth as a buyer of German products. Meanwhile, when Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Germany this summer, Foreign Minister Kinkel made a point of not mentioning human rights abuses, declaring on the contrary that "some people pretend time and again that human rights issues are the center of such a visit or of our contacts with China. That is not the case.... I assume that the economic boom in China will also be reflected in German order books."

Behind this chumminess lie strategic as well as economic concerns. For the Germans, China can serve as a lever against an aggressive Russia and an important vote if it is to realize its ambition of joining the U.N. Security Council as a permanent member—a fervent wish of both Kohl and Kinkel's. The Chinese, for their part, would like to build up Europe—and above all Germany—as a counterweight to the United States. The German-Chinese dalliance scarcely means that Bonn is about to bolt the Western alliance; it does mean that, in the aftermath of the cold war, Germany has the maneuvering room to search for new tactical alliances.

Germany is still anchored in NATO, of course. But it has not been lost on the Europeans, and the Germans in particular, that the American presence in Europe has declined by two-thirds since 1989 to just over 100,000 mili-

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tary personnel. Perhaps the most dramatic symbol of this drawdown is the luxurious Berlin suburb of Dahlem, where row upon row of houses that once quartered American officers now stand empty, waiting to be occupied by Bonn officials, who will soon be transplanting themselves to the new German capital. The only reminder of the American presence in Berlin is a small museum in Dahlem where an exhibition called "One Suitcase Will Always Remain Behind" commemorates the four decades during which American soldiers defended the divided city.

But the reduced military presence is not the only sign of waning American interest in Germany. In June, this year's Munich Defense Meeting failed to attract the leading American politicians it had attracted in the past, prompting the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* to editorialize, "formerly, U.S. congressmen used to go to Bonn and Berlin during the Easter recess to talk to German politicians. This year, not a single deputy from Washington came.... A similar trend can be noticed in the opposite direction: the Europeans seem to be losing interest in the Americans."

Against this backdrop of chillier German-American relations, policy toward Russia may well emerge as a source of tension. Though German officials regularly issue pious avowals of their faith in the transatlantic alliance, they are beginning to draw the conclusion that Germany, with its more natural interest in maintaining strong relations with its Russian near-neighbor, must replace the United States. Germany is the only European power with embassies in each of the former Soviet republics. And Germany, which continues to funnel vast sums of aid into Russia, may be wealthy enough to lay bets on both sides—use the Central Asian republics to hold Moscow in check, while continuing to prop up the tottering Yeltsin regime; allow Russia to have the Baltic states as its sphere of influence while protecting Poland and the Czech Republic. The recent CDU paper, "Reflections on European Policy," observed, for example, that Germany and France must guarantee Europe's security "since, now that the East-West conflict has come to an end, the USA can no longer play its traditional role in the same way."

Germany is clearly also reassessing its own military capabilities. As Walter Jertz, the general in charge of the Bundeswehr contingent stationed in Italy, said recently, "Realpolitik is making a comeback in Germany." The Federal Constitutional Court's decision last summer to permit German soldiers to serve in regions beyond the purview of NATO is the first step toward legitimizing the use of German troops by deploying them under the auspices of multilateral organizations. Now France, in the wake of its atomic test in the South Pacific, has raised the possibility of a German finger on the French nuclear button—an attempt to conscript Germany into a distinctly European military force.

But perhaps the most conspicuous example of Germany's new willingness to provide for its own security is the controversial twenty-megawatt nuclear reactor at the Munich Technical University in Garching. In the last fifteen years, China and Libya are the only other countries to have built research reactors using highly enriched uranium. Yet German officials have rebuffed the pleas of the Clinton administration and are pushing ahead with plans to build the Garching reactor, which will run on highly enriched uranium and which flouts nonproliferation agreements. Its construction does not suggest that the Germans are intent on building a nuclear bomb. It does suggest that they would like the capability in an emergency and that the German government has no compunctions about bruising American sensibilities.

Attitudes have begun to change in Germany—not only toward the United States but toward German nationalism as well. It is no longer taboo, for example, for the official Bundeswehr publication, *European Security*, to run an article calling for restoration of German pride and of Wehrmacht traditions that have ostensibly escaped the Nazi taint. Such sentiments represent a fringe element in Germany, where pacifism and war-guilt still run strong, but it is a fringe element that has begun to earn a hearing in respectable circles. For the most pronounced shift in attitude has taken place among the post-Kohl generation of conservative politicians, which bangs the nationalist drum with far more vigor than the chancellor himself ever has. Younger intellectual rightists have ensconced themselves in universities and publishing houses. In their own organ, *Junge Freiheit*, as well as in mainstream papers like *Welt am Sonntag* and *Die Welt*, these new celebrants of German "destiny" decry Germany's "reflexive" attachment to the West and its "obsession" with the Holocaust. They invoke the "coca-colaization" of Germany after 1945 and describe the United States as a nightmare of multiracial chaos. The new conservative elite calls itself the generation of '89 and sees itself locked in combat with the left-wing, fiercely unpatriotic generation of '68. Their aim is to carry out a "conservative revolution" by employing the tactics of the German new left to infiltrate the institutions of the Federal Republic.

Kohl's ailing coalition partner, the Free Democratic Party, now contains a faction seeking to transform it into a right-wing party along the lines of Austrian populist Jörg Haider's Freedom Party. The chancellor's likely successor, CDU Whip Wolfgang Schäuble, has tried to tap into these sentiments and push the CDU to the right by calling for a renewed emphasis on the idea of the "fatherland" and the German "*Volk*." As the memory of World War II and its aftermath grows more distant, so do relations between the U.S. and Germany.

Indeed, the era of smooth American-German relations produced by the cold war may well have been an aberration. Germany is flexing its own muscles now. And, while this assertion of interests is no reason to panic, the United States must stop clinging to the illusion that the new Germany is the old Germany. If the old relationship between the two countries depended on American goodwill toward Germany, the new one depends far more on German goodwill toward America. •

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Rethinking pro-choice rhetoric.

OUR BODIES, OUR SOULS

By Naomi Wolf

I had an abortion when I was a single mother and my daughter was 2 years old. I would do it again. But you know how in the Greek myths when you kill a relative you are pursued by furies? For months, it was as if baby furies were pursuing me.

These are not the words of a benighted, superstition-ridden teenager lost in America's cultural backwaters. They are the words of a Cornell-educated, urban-dwelling, Democratic-voting 40-year-old cardiologist—I'll call her Clare. Clare is exactly the kind of person for whom being pro-choice is an unshakeable conviction. If there were a core constituent of the movement to secure abortion rights, Clare would be it. And yet: her words are exactly the words to which the pro-choice movement is not listening.

At its best, feminism defends its moral high ground by being simply faithful to the truth: to women's real-life experiences. But, to its own ethical and political detriment, the pro-choice movement has relinquished the moral frame around the issue of abortion. It has ceded the language of right and wrong to abortion foes. The movement's abandonment of what Americans have always, and rightly, demanded of their movements—an ethical core—and its reliance instead on a political rhetoric in which the fetus means nothing are proving fatal.

The effects of this abandonment can be measured in two ways. First of all, such a position causes us to lose political ground. By refusing to look at abortion within a moral framework, we lose the millions of Americans who want to support abortion as a legal right but still need to condemn it as a moral iniquity. Their ethical allegiances are then addressed by the pro-life movement, which is willing to speak about good and evil.

But we are also in danger of losing something more important than votes; we stand in jeopardy of losing what can only be called our souls. Clinging to a rhetoric about abortion in which there is no life and no death, we entangle our beliefs in a series of self-delusions, fibs and evasions. And we risk becoming precisely what our critics charge us with being: callous, selfish and casually destructive men and women who share a cheapened view of human life.

In the following pages, I will argue for a radical shift in the pro-choice movement's rhetoric and consciousness about abortion: I will maintain that we need to contextualize the fight to defend abortion rights within a moral framework that admits that the death of a fetus is a real death; that there are degrees of culpability, judgment and responsibility involved in the decision to abort a pregnancy; that the best understanding of feminism involves holding women as well as men to the responsibilities that are inseparable from their rights; and that we need to be strong enough to acknowledge that this country's high rate of abortion—which ends more than a quarter of all pregnancies—can only be rightly understood as what Dr. Henry Foster was brave enough to call it: "a failure."

Any doubt that our current pro-choice rhetoric leads to disaster should be dispelled by the famous recent defection of the woman who had been Jane Roe. What happened to Norma McCorvey? To judge by her characterization in the elite media and by some prominent pro-choice feminists, nothing very important. Her change of heart about abortion was relentlessly "explained away" as having everything to do with the girlish motivations of insecurity, fickleness and the need for attention, and little to do with any actual moral agency.

This dismissive (and, not incidentally, sexist and classist) interpretation was so highly colored by subjective impressions offered up by the very institutions that define objectivity that it bore all the hallmarks of an exculpatory cultural myth: poor Norma—she just needed stroking. She was never very stable, the old dear—first she was a chess-piece for the pro-choice movement ("just some anonymous person who suddenly emerges," in the words of one NOW member) and then a codependent of the Bible-thumpers. Low self-esteem, a history of substance abuse, ignorance—these and other personal weaknesses explained her turnaround.

To me, the first commandment of real feminism is: when in doubt, listen to women. What if we were to truly, respectfully listen to this woman who began her political life as, in her words, just "some little old Texas girl who got in trouble"? We would have to hear this: perhaps Norma McCorvey actually had a revelation that she could no longer live as the symbol of a belief sys-

NAOMI WOLF is the author of *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st Century* (Ballantine).

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tem she increasingly repudiated.

Norma McCorvey should be seen as an object lesson for the pro-choice movement—a call to us to search our souls and take another, humbler look at how we go about what we are doing. For McCorvey is in fact an American Everywoman: she is the lost middle of the abortion debate, the woman whose allegiance we forfeit by our refusal to use a darker and sterner and more honest moral rhetoric.

McCorvey is more astute than her critics; she seems to understand better than the pro-choice activists she worked with just what the woman-in-the-middle believes: "I believe in the woman's right to choose. I'm like a lot of people. I'm in the mushy middle," she said. McCorvey still supports abortion rights through the first trimester—but is horrified by the brutality of abortion as it manifests more obviously further into a pregnancy. She does not respect the black-and-white ideology on either side and insists on referring instead, as I understand her explanation, to her conscience. What McCorvey and other Americans want and deserve is an abortion-rights movement willing publicly to mourn the evil—necessary evil though it may be—that is abortion. We must have a movement that acts with moral accountability and without euphemism.

With the pro-choice rhetoric we use now, we incur three destructive consequences—two ethical, one strategic: hardness of heart, lying and political failure.

Because of the implications of a Constitution that defines rights according to the legal idea of "a person," the abortion debate has tended to focus on the question of "personhood" of the fetus. Many pro-choice advocates developed a language to assert that the fetus isn't a person, and this, over the years, has developed into a lexicon of dehumanization. Laura Kaplan's *The Story of Jane*, an important forthcoming account of a pre-*Roe* underground abortion service, inadvertently sheds light on the origins of some of this rhetoric: service staffers referred to the fetus—well into the fourth month—as "material" (as in "the amount of material that had to be removed..."). The activists felt exhilaration at learning to perform abortions themselves instead of relying on male doctors: "When [a staffer] removed the speculum and said, 'There, all done,' the room exploded in excitement." In an era when women were dying of illegal abortions, this was the understandable exhilaration of an underground resistance movement.

Unfortunately, though, this cool and congratulatory rhetoric lingers into a very different present. In one woman's account of her chemical abortion, in the January/February 1994 issue of *Mother Jones*, for example, the doctor says, "By Sunday you won't see on the monitor *what we call the heartbeat*" (my italics). The author of the article, D. Redman, explains that one of the drugs the doctor administered would "end the growth of the fetal tissue." And we all remember Dr. Joycelyn Elders's remark, hailed by some as refreshingly frank and pro-woman, but which I found remarkably brutal: that "We really need to get over this love affair with the fetus...."

How did we arrive at this point? In the early 1970s, Second Wave feminism adopted this rhetoric in response to the reigning ideology in which motherhood was invoked as an excuse to deny women legal and social equality. In a climate in which women risked being defined as mere vessels while their fetuses were given "personhood" at their expense, it made sense that women's advocates would fight back by depersonalizing the fetus.

The feminist complaint about the pro-life movement's dehumanization of the pregnant woman in relation to the humanized fetus is familiar and often quite valid: pro-choice commentators note that the pro-life film *The Silent Scream* portrayed the woman as "a vessel"; Ellen Frankfort's *Vaginal Politics*, the influential feminist text, complained that the fetus is treated like an astronaut in a spaceship.

But, say what you will, pregnancy confounds Western philosophy's idea of the autonomous self: the pregnant woman is in fact both a person in her body and a vessel. Rather than seeing both beings as alive and interdependent—seeing life within life—and acknowledging that sometimes, nonetheless, the woman must choose her life over the fetus's, Second Wave feminists reacted to the dehumanization of women by dehumanizing the creatures within them. In the death-struggle to wrest what Simone de Beauvoir called transcendence out of biological immanence, some feminists developed a rhetoric that defined the unwanted fetus as at best valueless; at worst an adversary, a "mass of dependent protoplasm."

Yet that has left us with a bitter legacy. For when we defend abortion rights by emptying the act of moral gravity we find ourselves cultivating a hardness of heart.

Having become pregnant through her partner's and her own failure to use a condom, Redman remarks that her friend Judith, who has been trying to find a child to adopt, begs her to carry the pregnancy to term. Judith offers Redman almost every condition a birth-mother could want: "'Let me have the baby,'" she quotes her friend pleading. "'You could visit her anytime, and if you ever wanted her back, I promise I would let her go.'" Redman does not mention considering this possibility. Thinking, rather, about the difficulty of keeping the child—"My time consumed by the tedious, daily activities that I've always done my best to avoid. Three meals a day. Unwashed laundry..."—she schedules her chemical abortion.

The procedure is experimental, and the author feels "almost heroic," thinking of how she is blazing a trail for other women. After the abortion process is underway, the story reaches its perverse epiphany: Redman is on a Women's Day march when the blood from the abortion first appears. She exults at this: "'Our bodies, our lives, our right to decide.' ... My life feels luxuriant with possibility. For one precious moment, I believe that we have the power to dismantle this system. I finish the march,

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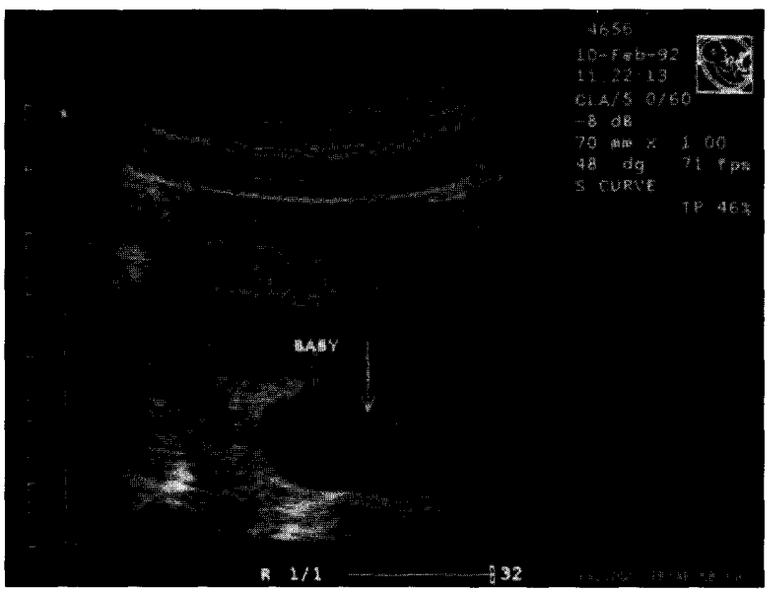
borne along by the women...." As for the pleading Judith, with everything she was ready to offer a child, and the phantom baby? They are both off-stage, silent in this chilling drama of "feminist" triumphalism.

And why should we expect otherwise? In this essay, the fetus (as the author writes, "the now-inert material from my womb") is little more than a form of speech: a vehicle to assert the author's identity and autonomy.

The pro-life warning about the potential of widespread abortion to degrade reverence for life does have a nugget of truth: a free-market rhetoric about abortion can, indeed, contribute to the eerie situation we are now facing, wherein the culture seems increasingly to see babies not as creatures to whom parents devote their lives but as accoutrements to enhance parental quality of life. Day by day, babies seem to have less value in themselves, in a matrix of the sacred, than they do as products with a value dictated by a market economy.

Stories surface regularly about "worthless" babies left naked on gratings or casually dropped out of windows, while "valuable," genetically correct babies are created at vast expense and with intricate medical assistance for infertile couples. If we fail to treat abortion with grief and reverence, we risk forgetting that, when it comes to the children we choose to bear, we are here to serve them—whomever they are; they are not here to serve us.



ULTRASONOGRAPHIC IMAGE OF A FETUS AT APPROXIMATELY SEVEN WEEKS GESTATION

Too often our rhetoric leads us to tell untruths. What Norma McCorvey wants, it seems, is for abortion-rights advocates to face, really face, what we are doing: "Have you ever seen a second-trimester abortion?" she asks. "It's a baby. It's got a face and a body, and they put him in a freezer and a little container."

Well, so it does; and so they do.

The pro-choice movement often treats with contempt the pro-lifers' practice of holding up to our faces their disturbing graphics. We revile their placards showing an enlarged scene of the aftermath of a D & C abortion; we are disgusted by their lapel pins with the little feet, crafted in gold, of a 10-week-old fetus; we mock the sensationalism of *The Silent Scream*. We look with pity and horror at someone who would brandish a fetus in formaldehyde—and we are quick to say that they are lying: "Those are stillbirths, anyway," we tell ourselves.

To many pro-choice advocates, the imagery is revolting propaganda. There is a sense among us, let us be frank, that the gruesomeness of the imagery *belongs* to the pro-lifers; that it emerges from the dark, frightening minds of fanatics; that it represents the violence of imaginations that would, given half a chance, turn our world into a scary, repressive place. "People like us" see such material as the pornography of the pro-life movement.

But feminism at its best is based on what is simply true. While pro-lifers have not been beyond dishonesty, distortion and the doctoring of images (preferring, for example, to highlight the results of very late, very rare abortions), many of those photographs are in fact photographs of actual D & Cs; those footprints are in fact the footprints of a 10-week-old fetus; the pro-life slogan, "Abortion stops a beating heart," is incontrovertibly true. While images of violent fetal death work magnificently for pro-lifers as political polemic, the pictures are not polemical in themselves: they are biological facts. We know this.

Since abortion became legal nearly a quarter-century ago, the fields of embryology and perinatology have been revolutionized—but the pro-choice view of the contested fetus has remained static. This has led to a bizarre bifurcation in the way we who are pro-choice tend to think about wanted as opposed to unwanted fetuses; the unwanted ones are still seen in schematic black-and-white drawings while the wanted ones have metamorphosed into vivid and moving color. Even while Elders spoke of our need to "get over" our love affair with the unwelcome fetus, an entire growth industry—Mozart for your belly; framed sonogram photos; home fetal-heartbeat stethoscopes—is devoted to sparking fetal love affairs in other circumstances, and aimed especially at the hearts of overscheduled yuppies. If we avidly cultivate love for the ones we bring to term, and "get over" our love for the ones we don't, do we not risk developing a hydroponic view of babies—and turn them into a product we can cull for our convenience?

Any happy couple with a wanted pregnancy and a copy of *What to Expect When You're Expecting* can see the cute, detailed drawings of the fetus whom the book's owner presumably is not going to abort, and can read the excited descriptions of what that fetus can do and feel, month by month. Anyone who has had a sonogram during pregnancy knows perfectly well that the 4-month-old fetus responds to outside stimulus—"Let's get him to

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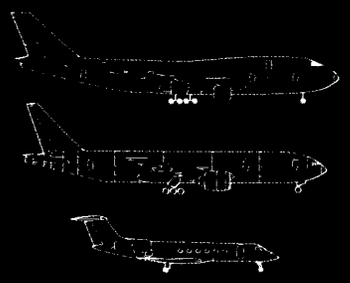

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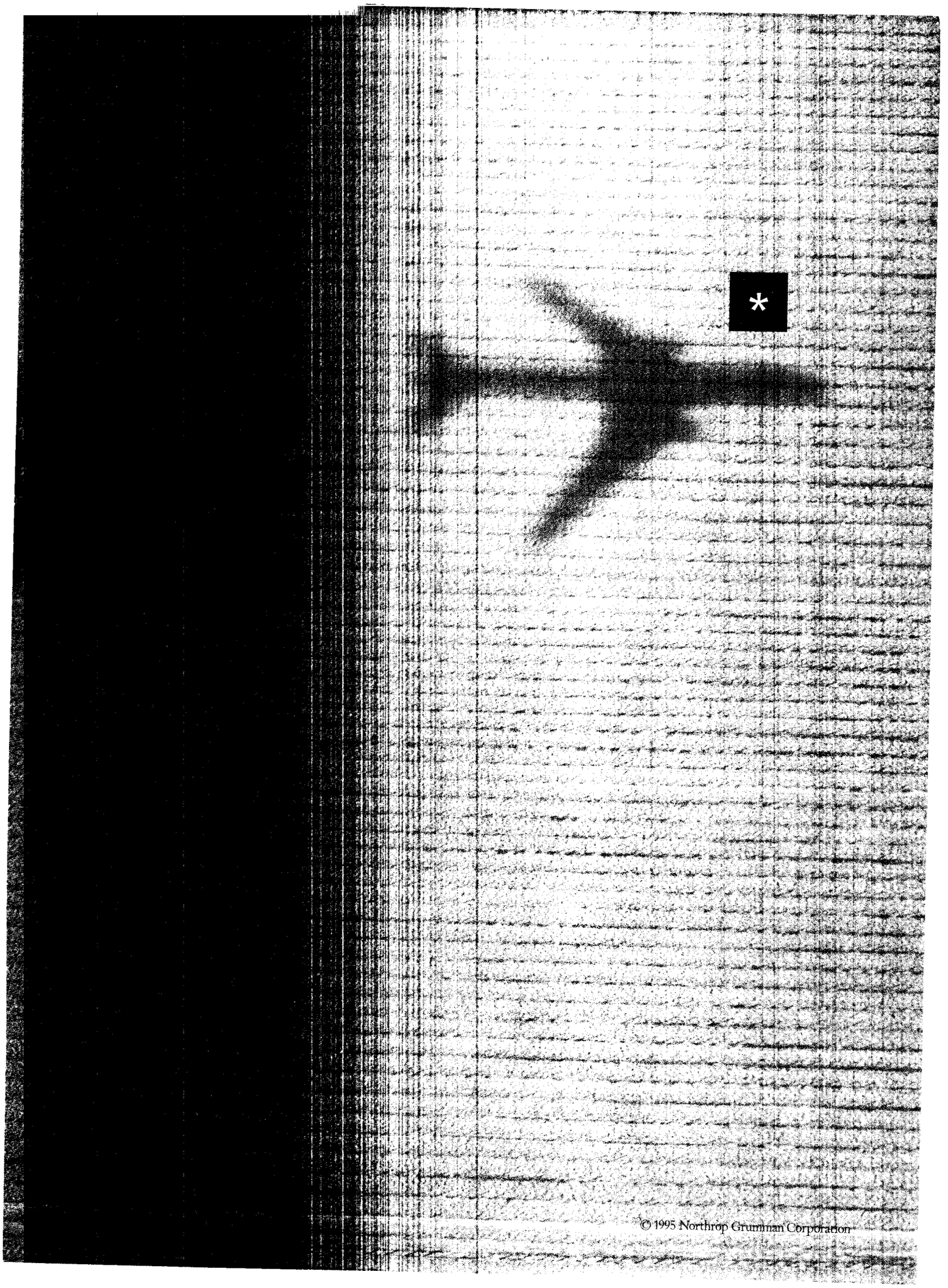

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look this way," the technician will say, poking gently at the belly of a delighted mother-to-be. *The Well Baby Book*, the kind of whole-grain, holistic guide to pregnancy and childbirth that would find its audience among the very demographic that is most solidly pro-choice reminds us that: "Increasing knowledge is increasing the awe and respect we have for the unborn baby and is causing us to regard the unborn baby as a real person long before birth...."

So, what will it be: Wanted fetuses are charming, complex, REM-dreaming little beings whose profile on the sonogram looks just like Daddy, but unwanted ones are mere "uterine material"? How can we charge that it is vile and repulsive for pro-lifers to brandish vile and repulsive images if the images are real? To insist that the truth is in poor taste is the very height of hypocrisy. Besides, if these images *are* often the facts of the matter, and if we then claim that it is offensive for pro-choice women to be confronted by them, then we are making the judgment that women are too inherently weak to face a truth about which they have to make a grave decision. This view of women is unworthy of feminism. Free women must be strong women, too; and strong women, presumably, do not seek to cloak their most important decisions in euphemism.

Other lies are not lies to others, but to ourselves. An abortion-clinic doctor, Elizabeth Karlin, who wrote a recent "Hers" column in *The New York Times*, declared that "There is only one reason I've ever heard for having an abortion: the desire to be a good mother."

While that may well be true for many poor and working-class women—and indeed research shows that poor women are three times more likely to have abortions than are better-off women—the elite, who are the most vociferous in their morally unambiguous pro-choice language, should know perfectly well how untrue that statement often is in their own lives. All abortions occupy a spectrum, from full lack of alternatives to full moral accountability. Karlin and many other pro-choice activists try to situate all women equally at the extreme endpoint of that spectrum, and it just isn't so. Many women, including middle-class women, do have abortions because, as one such woman put it, "They have a notion of what a good mother is and don't feel they can be that kind of mother at this phase of their lives." In many cases, that is still a morally defensible place on the spectrum; but it is not the place of absolute absolution that Dr. Karlin claims it to be. It is, rather, a place of moral struggle, of self-interest mixed with selflessness, of wished-for good intermingled with necessary evil.

Other abortions occupy places on the spectrum that are far more culpable. Of the abortions I know of, these were some of the reasons: to find out if the woman could get pregnant; to force a boy or man to take a relationship more seriously; and, again and again, to enact a rite of passage for affluent teenage girls. In my high school, the abortion drama was used to test a boyfriend's character. Seeing if he would accompany the girl to the operation or, better yet, come up with the money for the abortion could almost have been the 1970s Bay Area equivalent of the '50s fraternity pin.

The affluent teenage couples who conceive because they can and then erase the consequences—and the affluent men and women who choose abortion because they were careless or in a hurry or didn't like the feel of latex—are not the moral equivalent of the impoverished mother who responsibly, even selflessly, acknowledges she already has too many mouths to feed. Feminist rights include feminist responsibilities; the right to obtain an abortion brings with it the responsibility to contracept. Fifty-seven percent of unintended pregnancies come about because the parents used no contraception at all. Those millions certainly include women and men too poor to buy contraception, girls and boys too young and ill-informed to know where to get it, and countless instances of marital rape, coerced sex, incest and couplings in which the man refused to let the woman use protection.

But they also include millions of college students, professional men and women, and middle- and upper-middle-class people (11 percent of abortions are obtained by people in households with incomes of higher than $50,000)—who have no excuse whatsoever for their carelessness. "There is only one reason I've ever heard for having an abortion: the desire to be a good mother"—this is a falsehood that condescends to women struggling to be true agents of their own souls, even as it dishonors through hypocrisy the terminations that are the writer's subject.

Not to judge other men and women without judging myself, I know this assertion to be false from my own experience. Once, I made the choice to take a morning-after pill. The heavily pregnant doctor looked at me, as she dispensed it, as if I were the scum of the earth.

If what was going on in my mind had been mostly about the well-being of the possible baby, that pill would never have been swallowed. For that potential baby, brought to term, would have had two sets of loving middle-income grandparents, an adult mother with an education and even, as I discovered later, the beginning of diaper money for its first two years of life (the graduate fellowship I was on forbade marriage but, frozen in time before women were its beneficiaries, said nothing about unwed motherhood). Because of the baby's skin color, even if I chose not to rear the child, a roster of eager adoptive parents awaited him or her. If I had been thinking only or even primarily about the baby's life, I would have had to decide to bring the pregnancy, had there been one, to term.

No: there were two columns in my mind—"Me" and "Baby"—and the first won out. And what was in it looked something like this: unwelcome intensity in the relationship with the father; desire to continue to "develop as a person" before "real" parenthood; wish to encounter my eventual life partner without the off-putting encumbrance of a child; resistance to curtailing the nature of

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the time remaining to me in Europe. Essentially, this column came down to: I am not done being responsive only to myself yet.

At even the possibility that the cosmos was calling my name, I cowered and stepped aside. I was not so unlike those young louts who father children and run from the specter of responsibility. Except that my refusal to be involved with this potential creature was as definitive as a refusal can be.

Stepping aside in this way is analogous to draft evasion; there are good and altruistic reasons to evade the draft, and then there are self-preserving reasons. In that moment, feminism came to one of its logical if less-than-inspiring moments of fruition: I chose to sidestep biology; I acted—and was free to act—as if I were in control of my destiny, the way men more often than women have let themselves act. I chose myself on my own terms over a possible someone else, for self-absorbed reasons. But "to be a better mother"? "*Dulce et decorum est...*"? Nonsense.

Now, freedom means that women must be free to choose self or to choose selfishly. Certainly for a woman with fewer economic and social choices than I had—for instance, a woman struggling to finish her higher education, without which she would have little hope of a life worthy of her talents—there can indeed be an *obligation* to choose self. And the defense of some level of abortion rights as fundamental to women's integrity and equality has been made fully by others, including, quite effectively, Ruth Bader Ginsberg. There is no easy way to deny the powerful argument that a woman's equality in society must give her some irreducible rights unique to her biology, including the right to take the life within her life.

But we don't have to lie to ourselves about what we are doing at such a moment. Let us at least look with clarity at what that means and not whitewash self-interest with the language of self-sacrifice. The landscape of many such decisions looks more like Marin County than Verdun. Let us certainly not be fools enough to present such spiritually limited moments to the world with a flourish of pride, pretending that we are somehow pioneers and heroines and even martyrs to have snatched the self, with its aims and pleasures, from the pressure of biology.

That decision was not my finest moment. The least I can do, in honor of the being that might have been, is simply to know that.

Using amoral rhetoric, we weaken ourselves politically because we lose the center. To draw an inexact parallel, many people support the choice to limit the medical prolongation of life. But, if a movement arose that spoke of our "getting over our love affair" with the terminally ill, those same people would recoil into a vociferous interventionist position as a way to assert their moral values. We would be impoverished by a rhetoric about the end of life that speaks of the ill and the dying as if they were meaningless and of doing away with them as if it were a bracing demonstration of our personal independence.

Similarly, many people support necessary acts of warfare (Catholics for a Free Choice makes the analogy between abortion rights and such warfare). There are legal mechanisms that allow us to bring into the world the evil of war. But imagine how quickly public opinion would turn against a president who waged war while asserting that our sons and daughters were nothing but cannon fodder. Grief and respect are the proper tones for all discussions about choosing to endanger or destroy a manifestation of life.

War is legal; it is sometimes even necessary. Letting the dying die in peace is often legal and sometimes even necessary. Abortion should be legal; it is sometimes even necessary. Sometimes the mother must be able to decide that the fetus, in its full humanity, must die. But it is never right or necessary to minimize the value of the lives involved or the sacrifice incurred in letting them go. Only if we uphold abortion rights within a matrix of individual conscience, atonement and responsibility can we both correct the logical and ethical absurdity in our position—and consolidate the support of the center.

Many others, of course, have wrestled with this issue: Camille Paglia, who has criticized the "convoluted casuistry" of some pro-choice language; Roger Rosenblatt, who has urged us to permit but discourage abortion; Laurence Tribe, who has noted that we place the fetus in shadow in order to advance the pro-choice argument. But we have yet to make room for this conversation at the table of mainstream feminism.

And we can't wait much longer. Historical changes—from the imminent availability of cheap chemical abortifacients to the ascendancy of the religious right to Norma McCorvey's defection—make the need for a new abortion-rights language all the more pressing.

In a time of retrenchment, how can I be so sure that a more honest and moral rhetoric about abortion will consolidate rather than scuttle abortion rights? Look at what Americans themselves say. When a recent *Newsweek* poll asked about support for abortion using the rare phrasing, "It's a matter between a woman, her doctor, her family, her conscience and her God," a remarkable 72 percent of the respondents called that formulation "about right." This represents a gain of thirty points over the abortion-rights support registered in the latest Gallup poll, which asked about abortion without using the words "God" or "conscience." When participants in the Gallup poll were asked if they supported abortion "under any circumstances" only 32 percent agreed; only 9 percent more supported it under "most" circumstances. Clearly, abortion rights are safest when we are willing to submit them to a morality beyond just our bodies and our selves.

But how, one might ask, can I square a recognition of the humanity of the fetus, and the moral gravity of destroying it, with a pro-choice position? The answer can only be found in the context of a paradigm abandoned by the left and misused by the right: the paradigm of sin and redemption.

It was when I was four months pregnant, sick as a dog, and in the middle of an argument, that I realized I

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could no longer tolerate the fetus-is-nothing paradigm of the pro-choice movement. I was being interrogated by a conservative, and the subject of abortion rights came up. "You're four months pregnant," he said. "Are you going to tell me that's not a baby you're carrying?"

The accepted pro-choice response at such a moment in the conversation is to evade: to move as swiftly as possible to a discussion of "privacy" and "difficult personal decisions" and "choice." Had I not been so nauseated and so cranky and so weighed down with the physical gravity of what was going on inside me, I might not have told what is the truth for me. "Of course it's a baby," I snapped. And went rashly on: "And if I found myself in circumstances in which I had to make the terrible decision to end this life, then that would be between myself and God."

Startlingly to me, two things happened: the conservative was quiet; I had said something that actually made sense to him. And I felt the great relief that is the grace of long-delayed honesty.

Now, the G-word is certainly a problematic element to introduce into the debate. And yet "God" or "soul"—or, if you are secular and prefer it, "conscience"—is precisely what is missing from pro-choice discourse. There is a crucial difference between "myself and my God" or "my conscience"—terms that imply moral accountability—and "myself and my doctor," the phrasing that Justice Harry Blackmun's wording in *Roe* ("inherently, and primarily, a medical decision") has tended to promote in the pro-choice movement. And that's not even to mention "between myself and myself" (Elders: "It's not anybody's business if I went for an abortion"), which implies just the relativistic relationship to abortion that our critics accuse us of sustaining.

The language we use to make our case limits the way we let ourselves think about abortion. As a result of the precedents in *Roe* (including *Griswold* v. *Connecticut* and *Eisenstadt* v. *Baird*), which based a woman's right to an abortion on the Ninth and Fourteenth Amendments' implied right to personal privacy, other unhelpful terms are also current in our discourse. Pro-choice advocates tend to cast an abortion as "an intensely personal decision." To which we can say, No: one's choice of *carpeting* is an intensely personal decision. One's struggles with a life-and-death issue must be understood as a matter of personal conscience. There is a world of difference between the two, and it's the difference a moral frame makes.

Stephen L. Carter has pointed out that spiritual discussion has been robbed of a place in American public life. As a consequence we tend—often disastrously—to use legislation to work out right and wrong. That puts many in the position of having to advocate against abortion rights in order to proclaim their conviction that our high rate of avoidable abortion (one of the highest in developed countries, five times that of the Netherlands, for example) is a social evil; and, conversely, many must pretend that abortion is not a transgression of any kind if we wish to champion abortion rights. We have no ground on which to say that abortion is a necessary evil that should be faced and opposed in the realm of conscience and action and even soul; yet remain legal.

But American society is struggling to find its way forward to a discourse of right and wrong that binds together a common ethic for the secular and the religious. When we do that, we create a moral discourse that can exist in its own right independent of legislation, and we can find ground to stand upon.

Norma McCorvey explained what happened to her in terms of good and evil: she woke in the middle of the night and felt a presence pushing violently down on her. "I denounce you, Satan," she announced. This way of talking about evil is one of the chief class divisions in America: working-class people talk about Satan, and those whom Paul Fussell calls "the X group"—those who run the country—talk instead about neurotic guilt. While the elite scoff at research that shows that most Americans maintain a belief in the embodiment of evil—"the devil"—they miss something profound about the human need to make moral order out of chaos. After all, the only real difference between the experience described by Clare, the Cornell-educated pro-choicer, and McCorvey, the uneducated ex-alcoholic, is a classical allusion.

There is a hunger for a moral framework that we pro-choicers must reckon with. In the Karlin "Hers" column, the author announced proudly that pregnant women are asked by the counselor in the office, "So, how long have you been pro-choice?" Dr. Karlin writes that "Laughter and the answer, 'About ten minutes,' is the healthiest response. 'I still don't believe in abortion,' some women say, unaware that refusal to take responsibility for the decision means that I won't do the procedure."

How is this "feminist" ideological coercion any different from the worst of pro-life shaming and coercion? The women who come to a clinic that is truly feminist—that respects women—are entitled not only to their abortions but also to their sense of sin.

To use the term "sin" in this context does not necessarily mean, as Dr. Karlin believes, that a woman thinks she must go to hell because she is having an abortion. It may mean that she thinks she must face the realization that she has fallen short of who she should be; and that she needs to ask forgiveness for that, and atone for it. As I understand such a woman's response, she *is* trying to take responsibility for the decision.

We on the left tend to twitch with discomfort at that word "sin." Too often we have become religiously illiterate, and so we deeply misunderstand the word. But in all of the great religious traditions, our recognition of sin, and then our atonement for it, brings on God's compassion and our redemption. In many faiths, justice is linked, as it is in medieval Judaism and in Buddhism, to compassion. From Yom Kippur and the Ash Wednesday-to-Easter cycle to the Hindu idea of karma, the individual's confrontation with her or his own culpability is the first step toward ways to create and receive more light.

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How could one live with a conscious view that abortion is an evil and still be pro-choice? Through acts of redemption, or what the Jewish mystical tradition calls *tikkun*; or "mending." Laurence Tribe, in *Abortion: The Clash of Absolutes*, notes that "Memorial services for the souls of aborted fetuses are fairly common in contemporary Japan," where abortions are both legal and readily available. Shinto doctrine holds that women should make offerings to the fetus to help it rest in peace; Buddhists once erected statues of the spirit guardian of children to honor aborted fetuses (called "water children" or "unseeing children"). If one believes that abortion is killing and yet is still pro-choice, one could try to use contraception for every single sex act; if one had to undergo an abortion, one could then work to provide contraception, or jobs, or other choices to young girls; one could give money to programs that provide prenatal care to poor women; if one is a mother or father, one can remember the aborted child every time one is tempted to be less than loving—and give renewed love to the living child. And so on: *tikkun*.

But when you insist, as the "Hers" column writer did, on stripping people of their sense of sin, they react with a wholesale backing-away into a rigid morality that reimposes order: hence, the ascendancy of the religious right.

Just look at the ill-fated nomination of Dr. Henry Foster for Surgeon General. The Republicans said "abortion," and the discussion was over. The Democrats, had they worked out a moral framework for progressivism, could have responded: "Yes: our abortion rate is a terrible social evil. Here is a man who can help put a moral framework around the chaos of a million and a half abortions a year. He can bring that rate of evil down. And whichever senator among you has ever prevented an unplanned pregnancy—and Dr. Foster has—let him ask the first question."

Who gets blamed for our abortion rate? The ancient Hebrews had a ritual of sending a "scapegoat" into the desert with the community's sins projected upon it. Abortion doctors are our contemporary scapegoats. The pro-lifers obviously scapegoat them in one way: if pro-lifers did to women what they do to abortion doctors—harassed and targeted them in their homes and workplaces—public opinion would rapidly turn against them; for the movement would soon find itself harassing the teachers and waitresses, housewives and younger sisters of their own communities. The pro-life movement would have to address the often all-too-pressing good reasons that lead good people to abort. That would be intolerable, a tactical defeat for the pro-life movement, and as sure to lose it "the mushy middle" as the pro-choice movement's tendency toward rhetorical coldness loses it the same constituency.

But pro-choicers, too, scapegoat the doctors and clinic workers. By resisting a moral framework in which to view abortion we who are pro-abortion-rights leave the doctors in the front lines, with blood on their hands: the blood of the repeat abortions—at least 43 percent of the total; the suburban summer country-club rite-of-passage abortions; the "I don't know what came over me, it was such good Chardonnay" abortions; as well as the blood of the desperate and the unpreventable and accidental and the medically necessary and the violently conceived abortions. This is blood that the doctors and clinic workers often see clearly, and that they heroically rinse and cause to flow and rinse again. And they take all our sins, the pro-choice as well as the pro-life among us, upon themselves.

And we who are pro-choice compound their isolation by declaring that that blood is not there.

As the world changes and women, however incrementally, become more free and more powerful, the language in which we phrase the goals of feminism must change as well. As a result of the bad old days before the Second Wave of feminism, we tend to understand abortion as a desperately needed exit from near-total male control of our reproductive lives. This scenario posits an unambiguous chain of power and powerlessness in which men control women and women, in order to survive, must have unquestioned control over fetuses. It is this worldview, all too real in its initial conceptualization, that has led to the dread among many pro-choice women of departing from a model of woman-equals-human-life, fetus-equals-not-much.

This model of reality may have been necessary in an unrelenting patriarchy. But today, in what should be, as women continue to consolidate political power, a patriarchy crumbling in spite of itself, it can become obsolete.

Now: try to imagine real gender equality. Actually, try to imagine an America that is female-dominated, since a true working democracy in this country would reflect our 54-46 voting advantage.

Now imagine such a democracy, in which women would be valued so very highly, as a world that is accepting and responsible about human sexuality; in which there is no coerced sex without serious jailtime; in which there are affordable, safe contraceptives available for the taking in every public health building; in which there is economic parity for women—and basic economic subsistence for every baby born; and in which every young American woman knows about and understands her natural desire as a treasure to cherish, and responsibly, when the time is right, on her own terms, to share.

In such a world, in which the idea of gender as a barrier has become a dusty artifact, we would probably use a very different language about what would be—then—the rare and doubtless traumatic event of abortion. That language would probably call upon respect and responsibility, grief and mourning. In that world we might well describe the unborn and the never-to-be-born with the honest words of life.

And in that world, passionate feminists might well hold candlelight vigils at abortion clinics, standing shoulder to shoulder with the doctors who work there, commemorating and saying goodbye to the dead. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

A Departure, Some Arrivals

In Paris, in July of 1971, I went to visit Charles Denner, the sterling French actor who died a few weeks ago. I had been overwhelmed by his performances in two films, *Landru* and *Life Upside Down*, and was much more interested in talking to him than to the glitzier people offered by Unifrance, the government's film agency. I did see some of the others later, but for me Denner came first, in this quick trip to meet some French artists whose work had appealed to me.

The Unifrance translator who took me to Denner's apartment in the rue Carnot—and a modest building it was—had made a mistake. We rang Denner's doorbell at the appointed time: a dog barked inside. Then my Unifrance friend remembered that she had set the meeting for my hotel. She called the hotel and was told that Denner was there, waiting.

When we arrived, he was sitting quietly in a corner of the hotel's small garden, hatless, wearing a windbreaker, smoking a cigarette. After my apology, which he shrugged off, I told him that in a way I had met his dog before him. He smiled and said something to the effect that maybe he ought to quit while he was ahead.

Some film actors seem larger or smaller than their screen selves when you meet them. Denner was exactly the same size: short, solid, composed but agile. His cheekbones seemed, as on film, to suggest gaunt resolution. His nose was strong, declarative. His voice, as I already knew, was vibrant, with a touch of roughness under the music. He was cordial in a quite informal way. He was well established in France by then, but he seemed pleased that a foreigner had sought him out.

I told him why: because of his work in several films, including Truffaut's *The Bride Wore Black*, but especially for those two major roles. He glowed a bit. I told him I wanted to know more about the man who had done those performances. Would he tell me about himself?

He nodded and lit another cigarette. He had been born in 1926 to a Polish Jewish family who lived near Krakow and had been brought to France when he was 4. His earliest ambition was to be a cantor. He was in his early teens when the war came. He had joined the Resistance and had met an older man in his unit who became his intellectual mentor. They read Racine and Molière together in their hideouts. After the war, though he had never seen a play or a film, he decided to be an actor.

He first worked with a group of French-Jewish actors called the Companions of the Ark. In 1949 he was engaged by Jean Vilar, the founder of the Théâtre National Populaire, for Vilar's annual festival at Avignon, and he was with Vilar until 1953. By the time of our meeting he had appeared in 130 plays.

His first film was a small part in Louis Malle's *Elevator to the Gallows* (1957). Claude Chabrol saw him in a production of Brecht's *Arturo Ui*, in which he played the Goering character, fat, with a red wig, and chose him for Landru, slim, shaved head and bushy black beard. Two years later, in 1964, he had played the lead in Alain Jessua's *Life Upside Down*, a man whom we see slide slowly, dreamily, *happily* into immobilizing mental illness.

I told him I thought that *Landru*, a serious version of the Bluebeard story, ought to be played on double bills with Chaplin's *Monsieur Verdoux*. Denner took that as a considerable compliment and said that he himself had dared to hope this might happen sometime. (It never did, to my knowledge.) I told him that I would show *Landru* every year in a film course of mine if an undubbed 16mm print were available. (It never has been.) But I often showed *Life Upside Down*, I told him. "*Je suis très content*," he said, and looked it.

In later years, among many other roles, he played the lead in Truffaut's *The Man Who Loved Women*. But before that film was made, he did Claude Lelouch's *And Now My Love*. When Truffaut was in America in 1976 he wrote to a friend that Denner was "quite known and liked here" because of the Lelouch picture.

Denner hasn't been visible since 1986: he spent his last decade fighting cancer. His death, at 69, is a sharp reminder that his best work belongs in the gallery of the best acting in film history and ought to have the same (somewhat slim) chance of being remembered as the rest of that gallery. In any case, goodbye to him and thanks.

Ireland was conspicuously absent from world screens for decades. Occasionally it was used as a setting, but we didn't see many films made by Irish people. This has changed. In the last ten years or so

FILMS WORTH SEEING

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there has been a constant flow of pictures either entirely or predominantly Irish-made—*My Left Foot, The Field, The Commitments, The Snapper, Widow's Peak, Circle of Friends* and many more. There's even been an Irish retrospective at the Walter Reade Theater in Lincoln Center, where I saw a 1983 film by Kieran Hickey, *Attracta*, made from a William Trevor story, with my adored Wendy Hiller, now aging, in a beautiful performance.

The flow of Irish pictures has become so steady that the Irish film is now one more familiar kind of import. As in any such flow, much of it is mere merchandise. Such was *A Man of No Importance*, with Albert Finney as a Wildean Dublin bus conductor. His new picture, **The Run of the Country** (Castle Rock), in which he plays a rural Irish policeman, is another such. (Finney is English, as is the director, Peter Yates; but the writer, the subject and almost all the cast are Irish.)

Finney played a rural English policeman three years ago in *The Playboys*, which was a limp item, but it was more rewarding than this trite reworking of a troubled father-son relationship that ends with their embrace. Even more discomfiting is the way the IRA, not exactly a flip subject, is used as décor for this dim story.

Then there's **Broken Harvest** (Kit Parker), a much more earnest piece of work but not much less trite. An Irishman in New York reminisces, and we see him as a youth with his farmer father, just after his mother's death. The blood of the civil war still rankles, as do memories of the Black-and-Tans. This atmosphere is linked with the father's troubles, mostly because of another farmer who had been a disappointed suitor for the dead wife's hand.

All of it is genuine in intent, which only goes to prove yet again that genuineness isn't enough. The acting is clumsy, the director seems to be only a bystander watching the film happen, without input, and the story lags behind our predictions of it.

This Irish report is sad for someone who is as fond of Ireland as any completely non-Irish person can be. But what I would hate to see is a string of Irish films that expect to be welcome simply because they're Irish, and thus become tiresome. I'd hate to see The Wearing-Out of the Green. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

The Poor Caretaker

The chronicle of wasted American talent is a long and melancholy one, but few careers have ever seemed so profligate as that of Orson Welles. In *Orson Welles: The Road to Xanadu* (HarperCollins, $24), the first volume of his new two-part biography, Simon Callow consigns that woeful condition to a conflict in Welles between the artist and the careerist, which is to say between the self-expressive and self-publicizing elements of his character. Callow has unusual credentials for a biographer—he is an English actor and director of considerable wit and grace (you may remember him as the laconic aging gay man in kilts who gets buried instead of married in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*). And so he writes about this conflict from inside the whale.

He is also an accomplished writer on theater who has published books both on his own experience (*Being an Actor*) and on the life and career of that outsized histrio, Charles Laughton. Corpulent theater artists appear to have a special attraction for Callow, as if waist and waste were homonymous and synonymous. (I wouldn't be surprised if his next subject were Marlon Brando.) "The main questions asked of [Welles] when he died," he writes, "were: what went wrong after *Citizen Kane*?; and why did he get so fat?" Adding to an expanding body of works about the expanding body of Welles, this new biography suggests that things went wrong well before *Citizen Kane* and that Welles's precocity and obesity were the results of the same unappeasable appetite.

The Road to Xanadu takes us from the period preceding Welles's birth in 1915 to 1941, the year immediately following the release of his first film, when he was barely 26. The book finds its dramatic climax in the well-told tale, now amplified with rigorous research yielding many fresh details, of the making of *Citizen Kane* and the resistance that cinematic provocation encountered from Hearst, studio moguls and, surprisingly, its earliest critics and spectators. Since most of Welles's work prior to his Hollywood days was in theater or radio, Callow is primarily preoccupied in his first volume not with the failed promise and aborted projects of his movie career but with his remarkable work in theater and broadcasting, when this "boy wonder" was amazing the world with his youthful inventiveness.

After recounting Welles's meteoric career at the Todd School and telling the incredible story of the way he managed, at the age of 16, to land a leading part in *Jew Suss* at the Dublin Gate Theatre, Callow goes on to describe how he parlayed this opportunity into significant roles opposite Katharine Cornell without even an audition. Through a combination of seductiveness, exaggeration, manipulation and outright lies, and with the aid of an infatuated and gullible press corps (the one exception being Mary McCarthy, who continually panned his acting and directing), Welles set about constructing his own legend as not just a star but a major constellation.

Despite Callow's effort to maintain a balanced view, his book is not very kind to its subject. He finds Welles to be less a pure artist brought down by a corrupt system—the official view that Welles dictated to admirers such as Barbara Leaming and Peter Bogdanovich—than a basically flawed being whose faults were apparent almost from birth. *The Road to Xanadu* is a somewhat obsessive account of how, time after time, Welles betrayed his closest relationships, personal and professional, in the ruthless pursuit of his own ambitions.

Callow's indictment is well documented, but at times it is a bit too relentless. He often seems to be taking posthumous revenge on behalf of his profession for the many indignities that Welles visited on actors like himself. Those of us who regarded the legendary Mercury Theater—created by Welles and his partner John Houseman following an earlier collaboration on the Federal Theatre Project—as the classical counterpart to the idealistic Group Theatre are bound to come away disenchanted. Rather than a cohesive ensemble of committed artists subordinating their own interests to a greater artistic goal, the Mercury was, in Callow's view, a vehicle organized exclusively for the celebrity of its leaders. Houseman himself, the elder of these two "opportunists and buccaneers," admitted as much in his memoir *Runthrough*. Describing the death of their theater after barely two seasons, he wrote: "The Mercury had fulfilled its purpose. It had brought us success and fame; it had put Welles on the cover of *Time*." Callow bitterly adds: "The only real casualties were a few actors who had for a moment thought that they were engaged in the remaking of the American theater."

Although contemporary critics found

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Welles to be the "wonder boy of acting," if not the greatest actor in the world, Callow considers him an essentially external performer who demanded praise without working for it. He never bothered to prepare his roles, he barely bothered to learn his lines, being too busy gobbling triple steak sandwiches washed down with one or two bottles of brandy when he wasn't on the town betraying his new wife with ballerinas. Callow even dismisses Welles's most celebrated performance—as Charles Foster Kane—as too icy and reserved to reach the depths of the character, calling it the "most linear performance in the history of film."

I disagree with him about Welles's performance in *Kane*; it represents for me one of the very few times his irrepressible personality managed truly to inhabit another character. But there is no question that Welles was always a little too outsized, clumsy and self-conscious to be a convincing actor. Acting for Welles was something of a stunt, like playing the ancient Captain Shotover in Shaw's *Heartbreak House*, swaddled in tons of makeup, when he was only 22—though even under his makeup, as his music director Lehman Engel remarked, he seemed like a Peter Pan too heavy to fly. And his great booming voice, issuing from that pudgy baby face like "trombones doubled by cellos" (Callow's phrase), was an instrument more appropriate for radio than for stage or film. It is for that reason, perhaps, that his most effective performance in movies (if we discount his self-portrait in *The Third Man*) was as the narrative voice-over in *The Magnificent Ambersons*, taking a bow at the end, with his signature "your obedient servant Orson Welles," personified by a microphone. Indeed, his physical absence from that film may explain why it still remains his most concentrated cinematic achievement, regardless of the studio-imposed ending.

Despite the rhetorical and sentimental nature of his acting, however, Welles was surely one of the greatest directors in the history of theater or film, with a splendid design sense that made his productions pulse with metaphorical power. Callow tends to discount his staging achievements as well, often sounding like a Mercury actor griping about directorial intrusions and conditions at the theater. For Callow, it would seem, Welles's successes were due primarily to luck, nerve and salesmanship, his greatest gifts being those of a fabulist and a publicist.

But this does not explain away the unbroken string of artistic achievements Welles produced for the Negro Theater Unit (*Macbeth*) and for Unit 891 of Hallie Flanagan's Federal Theatre Project (*Horse Eats Hat, Doctor Faustus, The Cradle Will Rock*) until that federal agency was killed by Congress for exactly the same specious reasons now leveled against the National Endowment for the Arts. Nor does it account for Welles's brilliant unbroken record with the Mercury Theater (*Julius Caesar, The Shoemaker's Holiday, Heartbreak House, Too Much Johnson*) until his one flop, *Danton's Death*, closed it down forever. ("Welles's flops are louder than other men's," remarked Houseman ruefully.) As for Welles's radio shows, Callow finds these not so much examples of Welles's brilliance as illustrations of his personal vanity.

Admittedly, that vanity was prodigious. His name was mentioned nine times in three minutes on the first "Mercury Theater of the Air" without identifying any other actors, authors or technicians, while the "Campbell Playhouse" spent a third of the first broadcast introducing him as "the white hope of the American stage" ("he writes his own radio scripts and directs them, and makes them live and breathe with the warmth of his genius"). Still, in spite of the hype, many of those broadcasts were rich theatricalizations of classical novels (the panic-inducing *War of the Worlds* being only the most notorious). Compared with today's feeble and infrequent offerings on NPR, they seem like a golden age of American radio drama.

While acknowledging Welles's showmanship in creating these theater and

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—Frank Rich, *New York Times Book Review*

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broadcast triumphs, Callow is particularly severe about a directorial method that not only failed to credit other actors but reduced them to mere puppets in an egotistical marionette show. It is true that Welles never directed a play "straight." As an early "concept" director in the tradition of Vakhtangov, he always imposed his own ideas on the classics, ruthlessly cutting down the texts, transposing speeches, rearranging scenes and otherwise playing havoc with the author's intentions. He was among the first to modernize the classics by updating the texts and changing the geography, setting his voodoo *Macbeth* in Haiti and his anti-Fascist *Julius Caesar* in Mussolini's Italy, always for the sake of "recapturing their original energies."

This was also the declared purpose of the conceptual directors who followed him (Andrei Serban, Peter Sellars, Jonathan Miller, Robert Wilson). Like them, Welles was often charged with being a martinet choreographer, better at giving actors marching orders than helping them find their own steps. Unable to submerge his personality inside his roles, he didn't know how to help his cast transform either. And although the Mercury Theater company included some excellent people (Joseph Cotten, Hiram Sherman, Norman Lloyd, Agnes Moorehead, Vincent Price), there was always a lot of greenroom grumbling about Welles's insatiable lust for headlines. An artistic leader who dominates the reviews and announces to the press that "I am the Mercury Theater" is not likely to hold a company long.

The charge of Welles's credit-stealing has been raised before, notably by Pauline Kael in her introduction to *The Citizen Kane Book*. It is the one area where Welles's vanity found no creative compensation. Determined to be regarded as the sole *auteur* of each of his works, Welles was not reluctant to claim authorship of others' writing as well, even when his contribution was minimal or nonexistent. He couldn't very well deny appropriate credit to Shakespeare, Marlowe and Dekker, though he cut his productions of *Doctor Faustus* and *Shoemaker's Holiday* down to little over an hour each. But he forced Howard Koch to sign away his role in the writing of the *War of the Worlds* adaptation and refused even to allow the ambiguous credit "written by Howard Koch under the direction of Mr. Welles," when the account of the broadcast was being compiled.

Welles's conduct regarding the authorship of *Citizen Kane* was even more shocking. There is little question that the movie script was the sole work of Herman J. "Mank" Mankiewicz, with some editorial help from John Houseman, but Welles's lawyer insisted on inserting a

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clause in the contract saying that all of Mankiewicz's work was the property of Mercury Productions Inc. (i.e., Orson Welles), which was henceforth to be deemed "the author and creator thereof." Accustomed to the ways of Hollywood, where the screenwriter is considered only slightly more important than the Best Boy, Mank was more philosophical than Koch about the theft of his work, though he threatened exposure after Welles told Louella Parsons he had "written" *Citizen Kane*. No action was taken, but the witty Mankiewicz fantasized an Academy Award acceptance speech in which he said, "I am happy to accept this award in Mr. Welles's absence because the script was written in Mr. Welles's absence."

Callow speculates on the profound insecurities, dating from childhood, that inspired Welles's compulsion to consider himself the "onlie begetter" of a creative collaboration, the sole star of his own self-created drama, a Renaissance man in an age of narrow specialists. Callow's psychologizing is perhaps the weakest aspect of his book (he does too much "father figure" analysis as well as implying that Welles was bisexual, solely on the evidence of some ambiguous remarks). But there is no question that Welles had become as bloated with egotism as with meat and drink. On the other hand, he possessed more writing skill than Callow allows him. Aside from three unproduced plays, a book on directing and a best-selling series on *Everybody's Shakespeare* written when he was a mere stripling in collaboration with his mentor from the Todd School, Roger Hill, he was a brilliant improvisational wit. (He once characterized Basil Rathbone as "two profiles in search of a face.") He also had considerable insight into his own vanity, his craving for flattery and his rage for stardom.

Callow's most telling point is that although Welles hated Broadway and everything it stood for, he often behaved like a Broadway press agent. Perhaps he recognized that, the business of America being salesmanship, survival in the theater was essentially a question of learning how to control your own image. "If we could sell the end of the world," he remarked after being invited to run the Campbell Playhouse, "we could sell tomato soup, too." But he not only sold soup, he sold himself, lavishing as much care on publicizing his theater productions as on creating them. Callow has the good sense to note how a relationship with the press, "like any dependent relationship," is fraught with danger. Those whom the press would destroy they first make famous. And when the critics turned on Welles after *Danton's Death*, they had once again demonstrated that the only story that sells more newspapers than success is failure.

Welles defended himself by saying he had been denied the right to fail. "The Mercury has many faults, including its inability to produce an unbroken succession of smash hits, which is exactly and with absolutely no exaggeration essential to the maintenance of the permanent repertory company devoted to elaborate experimental productions under present Broadway circumstances." Although the critics' ignorance of process was the same problem that brought down the Group, Callow is skeptical about Welles's defense, emphasizing that the press had been remarkably indulgent toward the Mercury and that Welles's complaints were essentially self-serving. Whatever the case, it is clear that publicity for Welles was like supper for the dead Polonius—not where he eats, but where he is eaten.

The only time I saw Welles on stage was fifty years ago in *Around the World in Eighty Days*—acting, directing and performing his magic acts. (I can't remember if he claimed to be the adaptor.) He took his bow carrying a kitchen sink, as if to say, I defy anyone who complains this show has everything in it but.... Some years later, and fatter still, he would be peddling Paul Masson wine on television. Whether it was moral justice that Welles became such a disappointing failure—a case that Callow will no doubt try to prove in his second volume—it doesn't make the loss of his great theatrical promise any less disheartening. We come away from *The Road to Xanadu* with a sense of sadness not so much over how Welles failed his genius and consumed his substance as how, Saturn-like, the vast American celebrity machine eats up its most gifted children and spits them out as showmen. •

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The Fall

By Conor Cruise O'Brien

The First Man
by Albert Camus
edited by Catherine Camus
translated by David Hapgood

(Knopf, 325 pp., $23)

The First Man tells the story of Camus's childhood and youth in Algeria, together with a largely baffled enquiry into his father's life. The book consists of extensive fragments of a draft of an unfinished novel, with "interleaves" or notes indicative of intentions with regard to revision, and with the contents of a notebook by Camus called "The First Man (Notes and Sketches)."

Parts of the draft were never intended for publication in their present form. The third chapter, "Saint-Brieuc and Malan (J.G.)," carries a footnote: "Chapter to be written and deleted." A long description of a hunting party has the note: "the hunt? could be cut." Another footnote, to a section on the Kessous bombing in Algiers, runs: "Reword the Kessous bombing in the third part, and in that case only mention it here." Another footnote, to a passage on the education of the central figure, indicates the writer's intention to amplify and to alter the meaning of the passage as it stands. But *The First Man* is unfinished in still a deeper sense. Despite these indications of Camus's intention to make extensive revisions, an entry in "Notes and Sketches" casts some doubt on whether he meant to finish the book at all. On page 297 of this English edition, we read: "The book must be *unfinished.* Ex.: 'And on the ship bringing him back to France...'"

The First Man is described by its American publisher as Camus's "final work." This is somewhat misleading. An incomplete draft, which we know the writer intended to revise in a big way, cannot properly be exalted as his "final work." Camus himself was not accepting the draft here published as his "final work," and so it should not be offered as such to his readers. And there is another sense in which the words "his final work" might be misleading. The "final work" of Camus would be taken by readers to mean that *The First Man* was written after *The Fall,* Camus's last complete novel, which appeared in 1956. (He died in a car crash in 1960.)

Catherine Camus, the writer's daughter, who edited the French text and contributes an editorial note to the English edition, does not tell us when these drafts were written. We do know, from a reference to Jean-Baptiste Clamence in "Notes and Sketches," that Camus was working on *The First Man* after he had written *The Fall,* in the years immediately preceding his death, since Clamence is the hero (or anti-hero) of *The Fall.* But was much of the text written before he started to write *The Fall?* Was this autobiographical project a "work in progress" which Camus did not intend to deliver until much later, which he took up and laid down over quite a long period?

No doubt the French manuscripts will eventually provide answers to those questions. In the meantime I propose some tentative answers, based on "internal evidence": tricky stuff to handle, I know, but in its way quite telling. It is important to observe, for a start, that there is very little in *The First Man* that sounds like the author of *The Fall,* and not much that recalls *The Plague* (1947). There is a great deal, however, that recalls *The Stranger* (1942). Consider the following passage, in which Jacques Cormery—the central figure of the novel, whom it is impossible not to identify with Albert Camus—visits the grave of his father, Henri Cormery, killed on the Marne in 1914:

> The caretaker opened a large book bound in wrapping paper and went down a list of names with his dirty finger. His finger came to a stop. "Cormery Henri," he said, "fatally wounded at the Battle of the Marne, died at Saint-Brieuc October 11, 1914."
>
> "That's it," said the traveler.
>
> The caretaker closed the book. "Come," he said. And he led the way to the first row of gravestones, some of them simple, others ugly and pretentious, all covered with that bead and marble bric-a-brac that would disgrace anyplace on earth. "Was he related to you?" he asked absently.
>
> "He was my father."
>
> "That's rough," the other man said.
>
> "No it isn't. I was less than a year old when he died. So you see."
>
> "Yes," said the caretaker, "but even so. Too many died."
>
> Jacques Cormery did not answer. Surely, too many had died, but, as to his father, he could not muster a filial devotion he did not feel. For all those years he had been living in France, he had promised himself to do what his mother, who stayed in Algeria, what she for such a long time had been asking him to do: visit the grave of his father that she herself had never seen. He thought this visit made no sense, first of all for himself, who had never known his father, who knew next to nothing of what he had been, and who loathed conventional gestures and behavior; and then for his mother, who never spoke of the dead man and could picture nothing of what he was going to see.

This vividly recalls Meursault, the protagonist of *The Stranger.* That novel opens, famously, with the words: "Maman died today, or maybe, yesterday; I can't be sure." Meursault shocks the mortuary-keeper by declining to look at his mother's body, and also shocks a girlfriend by his quest for pleasure on the day after his mother's death. (Meursault's apparent callousness at the time of his mother's death is used against him, later in the novel, at his trial for murder.)

In a preface to an English edition of *The Stranger,* Camus wrote that

> ... the hero of the book is condemned because he doesn't play the game. In this sense he is a stranger to the society in which he lives; he drifts in the margin, in the suburb of private, solitary, sensual life. This is why some readers are tempted to consider him as a waif. You will have a more precise idea of this character, or one at all events in closer conformity with the intentions of the author, if you ask yourself in what way Meursault doesn't play the game. The answer is simple: He refused to lie. Lying is not only saying what is not true. It is also and especially saying more than is true, and, as far as the human heart is concerned, saying more than one feels. This is what we all do every day to simplify life. Meursault, despite appearances, does not wish to simplify life. He says what is true. He refuses to disguise his feelings, and immediately society feels threatened.

Cormery, in *The First Man,* is very like Meursault in this way, too, in his attitude to lies and to pleasure:

> For the worst of it was not the lies that after all he was unable to utter, ready as he always was to lie for pleasure but incapable

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of doing so out of necessity. The worst of it was the delights he had lost, the season's light and the time off that had been stolen from him and now the year consisted of nothing but a series of hasty awakenings and hurried dismal days.

In this "refusal to say more than they feel," Meursault and Jacques have a classical prototype in Alceste, the central figure in Molière's *Le Misanthrope*. But Molière was portraying the misery which a being who rejects hypocrisy can bring down on himself and others. In a more romantic tradition, Camus seems to feel that the integrity of that refusal is so beautiful in itself that its consequences—to the feelings and the fates of others, and to the hero himself—matter little.

At least that is the way that the Camus who wrote *The Stranger* and *The First Man* appears to feel about the central figures in these books. Not only do Meursault and Cormery have a lot in common as characters, but their creator's attitude to them is the same. It verges on the reverential, and sometimes it slips over the verge, as when Camus compares Meursault to Christ. And, as Meursault represents an aspect of Camus himself, and Cormery simply *is* Camus in every biographical respect, the writer's reverential approach to these characters has narcissistic overtones. That this was the case with an early work such as *The Stranger* need not detain us long: it was also the case with *Stephen Hero*, an early work of James Joyce. But it would matter a great deal, in our judgment of the book and of the writer's spiritual development, if Camus's "final work" were in the same vein, if it, too, was marred by the melodrama of the self that characterizes his first efforts. And that is one of the reasons why I am reluctant to accept *The First Man* as some sort of final testament.

Camus's real "final work," his final complete work and his final testament, remains *The Fall*. In *The Fall*, Camus broke new ground. He succeeded in distancing himself from some of the elements that had constricted his earlier work. There was a great change in tone. The story of Jean-Baptiste Clamence is urbane and humorous, with a slightly sinister undertone to the humor. Self-righteousness is gone. This evolution is important. The earlier Camus had been an authority, a judge; but Clamence is a *juge-penitent*: a man once armored in his own righteousness who has been driven by experience to disavow moral superiority. (He had been witness to a drowning and had failed to attempt a rescue.)

In *The Fall*, Camus was shedding his own role, in the aftermath of the Liberation, as Camus *le juste*, and also his role as a contemporary Saint-Just, the revolutionary avenger; and he was also rejecting the more quietistic but equally unrelenting moralism of *The Plague*. Still more, he was leaving *The Stranger* behind, too. While there is no explicit rejection in *The Fall* of what might be called the aesthete's anarchism of *The Stranger*, the tone of the last novel rejects that affectation, too. In his last novel Camus was breaking with himself, with his own work.

The Fall has the quality of a great self-reckoning. For this reason, it is Camus's best work. It reminds me very powerfully of Yeats's "The Circus Animals' Desertion," in which the mature poet rids himself of a lot of romantic lumber that had been useful to him in earlier years and suffices, wisely and soberly, with "the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart." Yeats's poetry was better for the desertion of the circus animals, and *The Fall*, which marked the desertion of Saint-Just and Meursault and Tarrou, seemed to herald an equally admirable evolution in the work of Camus. It was with considerable disappointment, therefore, that in reading this incomplete and posthumous work I found myself back in the world of *The Stranger*,

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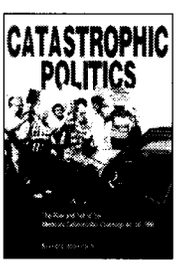

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and occasionally also in the world of *The Plague*. In *The First Man* the old solemnity reigns, with seriousness about self as its consort. Humor is no more. Self-criticism has vanished. It is as if Jean-Baptiste Clamence had never been born.

But what if my hypothesis about the dates of composition and the sequence of Camus's novels is wrong? What if most, or even all, of *The First Man* were written after *The Fall*, so that *The First Man* is, if not Camus's "final work," at least a draft of what might have become Camus's final work? Then we must face an inescapable conclusion about Camus's development as a writer. On the basis of *The First Man*, and its return to the aestheticism and the self-righteousness of his earlier writings, we must conclude that as a writer Camus regressed, that he reneged upon his greatest literary and intellectual attainments.

In seeking to account for this regression, we must turn to the situation of Camus's people, the *pieds-noirs*, the Europeans of Algeria, in the period between the completion of *The Fall* in 1956 and Camus's death in February, 1960. (I say the Europeans of Algeria rather than the French of Algeria, the more conventional description, because Camus's mother was Spanish in origin, though his father was French. Camus was born in Mondovì, Algeria, in 1913.) The situation of Camus's people was bad throughout 1956, but it suddenly worsened in November, 1956; and it continued to worsen from 1957 to 1960. (As it did after 1960 until its disastrous end in 1962, though Camus did not live to witness that last period.)

The great turning point came in November 1956, at Suez. The French government of Guy Mollet was the main instigator of that debacle, and its motive was to save *Algérie Française*. Many people in France in this period believed that Gamel Abdel Nasser, the revolutionary strongman in Cairo, was the main source of all the troubles of the French in Algeria. Topple Nasser and all would be well. Things were not so simple (as they would have found if they had toppled him). But the important fact, for a consideration of Camus's evolution, is that he, too, in the mid-'50s, was an ardent supporter of the view that Nasser was the root of all Algerian evil, and he propounded it in his journalism of the period.

French Algeria could be saved by standing up to Nasser: this was Camus's position when he was writing *The Fall*. *The Fall* is not a political novel, at least in any explicit manner, and unlike *The First Man* it is set in Europe, not in Algeria. Still, it was written at a time when Camus believed that there was still hope for his beleaguered people. This helps to account for the relative serenity of the work. And there was a subliminal political message in the book: in the figure of Jean-Baptiste Clamence, Camus was distancing himself from the self-righteousness of his former friends and comrades of the French intelligentsia, who wished to abandon Camus's people and hand over Algeria to the FLN.

Then, in November 1956, France stood up to Nasser, and all was by no means well. Nasser was saved by the superpowers. France (along with Britain) was forced into a humiliating withdrawal from Egypt. In Algeria, Nasser's triumphant voice could be heard over the airwaves encouraging the FLN rebels to step up their resistance. Now the FLN felt assured of victory, and the *colons* began to contemplate the probability of defeat and exile, or worse. Camus's panacea for the troubles of French Algeria had been tried, and it had left French Algeria in a far worse plight than anything it had previously known.

ALBERT CAMUS BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

It would not be surprising if Camus, who was profoundly attached to his people, came to experience something close to despair in the aftermath of Suez, as the Algerian war grew even more savage than it was before. And regression is sometimes one of the consequences of despair. Some parts of *The First Man* may antedate the composition of *The Fall* and the debacle of Suez; but I feel sure that the composition of certain episodes, directly dealing with the Algerian war, dates from the period 1957-1959. The most powerful passage in *The First Man*, and surely this cannot be coincidence, deals with the despair of a *colon*.

I shall quote this passage in full, as it deserves to be quoted. Jacques, searching for people who may remember his own father, calls on Veillard, a French-Algerian farmer. Veillard knows nothing about Jacques's father, but he has a lot to say about his own father:

> "Well," said Jacques, "I took your time for nothing."
>
> "No," the other man said, "it's a pleasure." And he smiled at him.
>
> Jacques finished his drink. "Did your parents remain near the border?'
>
> "No, it's the forbidden zone. Near the dam. And it's obvious you don't know my father." He too swallowed the rest of his drink, and, as if he found an extra stimulus in it, he burst out laughing: "He's a real settler. Of the old school. You know, the ones they're bad-mouthing in Paris. And it's true he's always been a hard man. Sixty years old. But long and thin like a puritan

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with his [horse's] head. A kind of patriarch, you see. He sweated his Arab workers, and, in all fairness, his sons also. Then, last year, when they had to evacuate, it was a real free-for-all. Life in that region had become intolerable. You had to sleep with a gun. When Raskil farm was attacked, you remember?"

"No," said Jacques.

"Yes, the father and his two sons had their throats cut, the mother and daughter raped over and over, then killed.... In short.... The prefect was unfortunate enough to tell a meeting of farmers that they would have to reconsider [colonial] issues, how they treated the Arabs, and that now a new day had come. Then he had to listen to the old man tell him no one on earth was going to lay down the law about his property. But from that day on he didn't open his mouth. Sometimes at night he would get up and go out. My mother would watch him through the blinds and she'd see him walking around his land. When the order to evacuate came, he said nothing. His grape harvest was over, his wine was in the vats. He opened the vats, and he went to a spring of brackish water that he'd diverted long ago, and he turned it back to run in his fields, and he equipped a tractor with a trench plow. For three days, at the wheel, barcheaded, saying not a word, he uprooted the vines all over his property. Think of it, that skinny old man bouncing around on his tractor, pushing the accelerator lever when the plow wasn't getting a vine that was bigger than the others, not stopping even to eat, my mother bringing him bread, cheese, and [*sobrasada*], which he ate calmly, the way he had done everything, throwing away the last chunk of bread and accelerating some more, all this from sunrise to sunset, without even looking at the mountains on the horizon, nor at the Arabs who'd soon found out and were watching him from a distance—they weren't saying anything either. And when a young captain, informed by who knows who, arrived and demanded an explanation, he said to him, 'Young man, since what we made here is a crime, it has to be wiped out.' When it was all finished, he headed toward the farmhouse, crossed the yard that was soaked with wine pouring out of the vats, and began to pack his bags. The Arab workers were waiting for him in the yard. (There was also a patrol the captain had sent, no one knew just why, with a nice lieutenant who was waiting for orders.)

"'Boss, what are we going to do?'"

"'If I were in your shoes,' the old man said, 'I'd go join the guerrillas. They're going to win. They're no men left in France.'"

The farmer laughed: "That was blunt, eh?"

"Are they with you?"

"No, he didn't want to hear a word about Algeria. He's in Marseilles, in a modern apartment.... *Maman* writes me that he goes around his room in circles."

Surely this passage is a transposition into fiction of the downfall of the *colons* in 1957 to 1960 in Algeria at the time.

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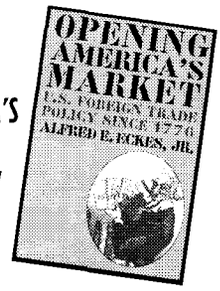

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And in "Notes and Sketches" there is a passage which envisages that Europe itself will eventually share the fate of Veillard's father, and the other *colons* of Algeria:

> Tomorrow, six million yellow people, billions of yellow, black, and dark-skinned people will pour onto the shore of Europe ... and at best would [convert her]. Then everything that had been taught, to him and those like him, also everything he had learned, on that day the men of his race, all the values he lived for, would die of uselessness. Then what would still be worthwhile? His mother's silence. *He lay down his arms before her.*

Again, the historical echoes of this passage are very strong. (Some Americans appear to entertain similar fears about the future of America in the coming century.)

Camus's mother is a dominant presence in *The First Man*. His anguish about her, an anguish made up of love and guilt, is imprinted on many of these pages. And this, too, is closely connected with the fate of the *colons*. In 1958, Camus had famously announced: "If I were forced to choose between my mother and justice, I would choose my mother." This statement scandalized the politically correct of the time, who saw in it a betrayal of progressive universalism, and it completed the breach between Camus and the left-wing intellectuals, his former comrades. And yet the truth was more complicated. Camus had "chosen" his mother, but he had not made the same choice as she did. Camus's mother chose to remain in Algeria, knowing nothing of metropolitan France. Camus, though he thought and felt and wrote about Algeria, did all that in France, where he preferred to live.

As Jacques reflects in *The First Man*, "The Mediterranean separates two worlds in me...." Camus was living in one of those worlds, and his mother was living in the other. And the separation was not just physical and geographical. Camus—or "Jacques"—felt that he and his mother were living in different worlds. His mother was almost completely illiterate; she barely managed to learn to write the two words "*Veuve Camus*," which she needed to receive her widow's pension. Intellectually, her son left her as his education advanced. The intellectual divorce became complete when he attended the *lycée* in Algiers.

The son's anguish about all this is desperately sincere, but there is something disquieting, something rather maudlin, about the ways in which it is expressed in *The First Man*, especially in the "interleaves" and "Notes and Sketches":

> O mother, O love, dear child, greater than my times, greater than the history that subjected you to itself, more true than all I have loved in this world, O mother, forgive your son for having fled the night of your truth.
>
> And what he wanted most in the world, which was for his mother to read everything that was his life and his being, that was impossible. His love, his only love, would be forever speechless.
>
> I want to write the story of a pair joined by the same blood and every kind of difference. She similar to the best this world has, and he quietly abominable. He thrown into all the follies of our time; she passing through the same history as if it were that of any time. She silent most of the time, with only a few words at her disposal to express herself; he constantly talking and unable to find in thousands of words what she could say with a single one of her silences ... Mother and son.

Such passages, it seems to me, are strong evidence of psychological and literary regression.

Not everything in *The First Man* is grim and guilt-laden. The long passages about Jacques's youth reflect almost the same sensuous pleasure in the Algerian setting that we know from *The Stranger*, and from Camus's idyllic, almost ecstatic early essays on the ravishments of the sun and the wind and the sea. But not precisely the same pleasure. A large part of the charm of *The Stranger* is the zest in it: the undertone of animal exhilaration beneath a grim storyline and dour dialogue. The relevant passages in *The First Man* seek to recapture that zest, but this time the account is tinged with nostalgia. Indeed, nostalgia seems to be the animating force in *The First Man*, the spirit that moves him back toward the world of *The Stranger*.

The First Man is a fascinating but disappointing book; and it appears to be all that we have of the book on which Camus was working in the three years before his death. All students of Camus owe a debt of gratitude to Camus's children for preserving the manuscript and releasing it for publication. In a modest and sensible editor's note, Catherine Camus writes:

> [I]t is obvious that my father would never have published this manuscript as it is, first for the simple reason that he had not completed it, but also because he was a very reserved man and would no doubt have masked his own feelings far more in its final version. But it seems to me—and I say this with hesitation, for I claim no objectivity—it seems to me that

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one can most clearly hear my father's voice in this text because of its very rawness. That is why I hope readers will come to it in a spirit of brotherhood.

It is appropriate and affecting that Camus's daughter should hear her father's voice in this book "because of its very rawness." But the book is rawer than she allows. The lucidity that Camus unsentimentally celebrated in *The Myth of Sisyphus* and elsewhere, the courage of consciousness in the face of horror and absurdity, is no more. It has been replaced by nostalgia, which is the hope of those who feel condemned by history. *The First Man* is a backward-looking book, the work of a writer disarmed by the knowledge that his community was doomed. It suggests, unhappily, that the last writings of Albert Camus, the great hero of the modern struggle against despair, were themselves the products of despair.

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN is the author of, among other books, *Camus* (Viking).

The Plague

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A belief in single causes has motivated medical researchers since the introduction of the germ theory in the late nineteenth century. In this formulation, every disease has one instigating factor which is the sole determinant of the evolving pathological process. Having accepted such a proposition, the aim of research becomes to identify the distinctive etiological agent and then to discover a method of preventing it from wreaking its havoc on the body. Although it is now well known that the likelihood of an individual's actually developing a particular disease is the result of multiple influences, biomedical science is focused, correctly so, on discovering what might be called the *sine qua non*, the entity without which the disease would not occur.

The paradigm for the principle of single causes was constructed as a result of Louis Pasteur's demonstration in the 1850s and 1860s that fermentation is the result of the activity of specific microorganisms. A rapid series of developments resulted from Pasteur's work, culminating in Robert Koch's proof in 1876 that sheep anthrax is caused by one particular germ, which would appropriately be named *Bacillus anthracis*. Koch's research led him gradually to a set of criteria, first put forth in 1882, which must be satisfied in order to prove that a distinct microbe is the cause of a distinct disease. Now famously known as Koch's postulates, the criteria are four in number: (1) the microbe must be found in every case of the disease being studied; (2) it must be isolated from a case of the disease and grown in pure culture uncontaminated by other microbes; (3) when inoculated into an experimental animal, the pure culture must be capable of producing the disease; and (4) the microbe must then be recovered from the sick animal.

Although circumstances have not always permitted rigid adherence to these strict standards, Koch's postulates have been enormously influential in the steady sequence of twentieth-century advances in the field of microbiology. So remarkable are those advances that they seemed, until the advent of the AIDS pandemic, to be leading inevitably toward a total victory over infectious disease. In a historical sense, however, the four criteria have done far more than merely to provide the structure for scientific proof. They have become the perfect expression of medicine's unending search for single causes.

Of all the multiple pathways of biomedical investigation, the field of infectious disease research has been the most characterized by that search. Not only is it the original model from which other fields have taken their cues, but its very nature of well-defined syndromes caused by specific agents epitomizes the thesis on which the principle is based. Even before individual types of germs could be isolated and identified, the introduction of a single prophylactic or therapeutic measure sometimes changed medical history and made its lone proponent a

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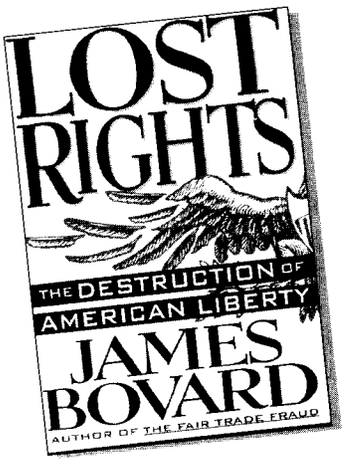

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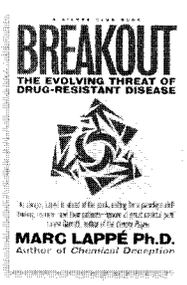

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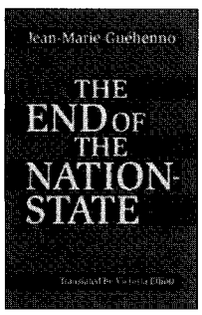

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hero, usually in his own lifetime. Pasteur and Koch were not the only celebrities of their kind; there were also Paul Ehrlich of the "magic bullet," Joseph Lister of antisepsis fame and Ignac Semmelweis, who fought childbed fever by telling obstetricians to wash their hands. If is no accident that so many of the medical names that became familiar to ordinary people are associated with research to combat bacterial or viral diseases. Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin, the central scientific figures in Tony Gould's book, are two of the most recent of the breed.

The principle of single causes has yielded a bountiful harvest in terms of medical progress, but it has sometimes had a rather inhibiting effect on the recognition of other factors that either contribute to the evolution of a disease or are necessary conditions required for the single cause to result in pathology. Even the discovery of such surprises as the existence of three separate immunologic strains of the polio virus did not shake faith in the thesis. The notion's appeal is understandable: not only is the concept a vital stimulus to science, but it has been very attractive to a general public which often sees biomedicine in terms of campaigns, breakthroughs and conquests, and has traditionally hailed successful researchers as figures to be lionized. Since today's scientific endeavor has become increasingly complex and interdependent, however, it demands much more collaboration than in generations past. There will be no Jonas Salks or Albert Sabins among the geneticists. The day of the biomedical lone eagle is over.

And yet the memory of such soaring demigods continues to stir the hearts of a public woefully short of worshipworthy figures. Well-documented revelations of scientific fraud and a feverish quest for consulting fees and similar perks by some of today's researchers have fueled nostalgia for what are seen as the more direct truths of a previous era, and for less sullied idols. When Jonas Salk died this past June, an obituary writer waxed sentimental as he reminisced of the bygone day when "America's greatest hero was for a time a man in a white lab coat."

Almost exactly four decades ago, the name Jonas Salk was on everyone's lips. He was the white knight who had emerged victorious from doing single combat with the single cause of poliomyelitis. At a public meeting held in a large auditorium at the University of Michigan on April 12, 1955—it was, coincidentally the tenth anniversary of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's death—the Vaccine Advisory Committee of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis announced the long-awaited results of large-scale testing against controls of Salk's vaccine in schoolchildren. In that test, 200,745 children had been given the new preventive, with a resulting reduction of more than 50 percent in the number of cases of polio from what had been expected. Not one child had contracted the disease by being immunized.

In that brief announcement, the entire world heard the glorious news that had been so long awaited. Although at least 100,000 new cases of polio still occur every year in underdeveloped countries, the virus has been eliminated in the Americas and other Western countries. For this reason, and because the appearance of a new and universally lethal infectious disease has tended to blot out memories of previous epidemics of death and permanent disability, it is difficult for most people under the age of 45 to imagine the terrifying grip in which so-called infantile paralysis once held the entire nation and the world. It is primarily associated in the public mind with children, but poliomyelitis became, during the last decades of its prevalence, increasingly an illness also of young adults. In the height of summer in the early 1950s, when swimming pools and other publicly shared facilities came into greater use, it was common to encounter a hospital ward full of patients in their early 20s.

Despite speculation based on ancient tales and ancient art, no incontrovertible evidence has been discovered of polio's existence before the nineteenth century, at least not in its epidemic form. American historians think of it as a distinctly twentieth-century disease, since its incidence began to increase at a prodigious pace after the summer of 1894, when the nation's first real epidemic occurred in the form of 132 cases in Rutland County, Vermont. So rapidly did the numbers rise in various states following the Vermont outbreak that polio had become recognized, by 1910, as a major public health problem. Still, few were prepared for the dreadful watershed experience of 1916, when the incidence rate suddenly quadrupled. In that year 27,000 cases were reported from twenty-six states, and more than 6,000 deaths. A near-panic was precipitated in New York City, where an onslaught of 9,000 cases with 2,343 deaths occurred, causing authorities to resort to draconian (if ineffective) quarantine measures and even travel restrictions. Although epidemics continued to occur each summer, the numbers dropped back somewhat

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until the early 1940s, when the incidence began to increase gradually over the years. In 1952, health officers recorded 57,628 new cases.

Among neurological diseases of any significant frequency, polio is unique in its ability to cause rapid and often permanent paralysis in its victims. The crippling is the result of the destruction of motor cells in the spinal cord, occurring with such swiftness that it was not uncommon in my medical-school days more than forty years ago to see a child admitted in the morning with mild weakness of one leg who then went on to total neck-down paralysis by sundown and stayed alive only because he had been hastily placed in an "iron lung" respirator. Not a few of those patients died, and others needed some type of respiratory support for the rest of their lives.

Dr. Dorothy Horstmann, a leading polio researcher of that era, tells of visiting large hospital rooms where as many as thirty patients lay immobilized and helpless in their iron lungs, while nurses scurried about trying to attend to everyone's needs. As a third-year medical student, I saw a young woman die only a few hours after admission for lower extremity weakness, as the neurological damage progressed upward with such astonishing speed that she drowned in her own secretions while surgeons frantically attempted to make an opening into her windpipe. And these were not uncommon sights in American hospitals four decades ago. Even those who recovered were often left permanently disabled. Several hundred thousand Americans still bear the crippling residues of polio.

No wonder, then, the excitement of that April day in 1955, and no wonder that the long-hoped-for news was thought glorious. Despite every attempt at scholarly restraint by the levelheaded chairman of the committee, Dr. Thomas Francis Jr., the actual announcement of the Salk vaccine's success was accompanied, in the words of an observer, by "the rocket's red glare and flashbulbs bursting in air." The day's events were the stuff of extravaganza. Just as the field trials had represented the largest such medical effort in history, so the presentation of the outcome was turned into a public spectacle the likes of which had never before been witnessed. In addition to the auditorium full of newsmen and photographers, one of the vaccine's manufacturers was permitted to provide a special broadcast to 54,000 doctors in sixty-one cities by closed-circuit television. Years of research and a field study of meticulous scientific rigor were sensationalized to pander to the media and a worldwide audience hungry not only for good news, but for the appearance of a white knight. In the words of Dr. John Paul, a highly respected polio researcher of decades-long experience, "The information that had been gathered so painstakingly at the Evaluation Center and at such an expense of time, money, and energy, did not deserve to be so cheapened by the outburst that ensued."

The savior had been known as a modest man, shy in fact. He had already been made uncomfortable by the premature glare of the limelight two years earlier, when *Time* magazine printed his picture in an article proclaiming the imminence of a polio vaccine. The publicity following that article resulted in intense criticism from some of the other major workers in the field: John Paul, Thomas Francis and Albert Sabin. To worsen his discomfiture, a letter had come to Salk from Sabin, purportedly to advise his younger colleague not to "let them push you to do anything prematurely," but tinged with sarcasm and censure nevertheless. It was not the first time, nor would it be the last time, that Sabin would let fly a dart. And the darts were succeeded by flaming arrows.

Salk was 40 years old, the son of a worker in New York's garment district. He seems in retrospect to have been without resources to deal with his new fame. As Tony Gould nicely describes it, "Everyone wanted to shake or kiss his hand or touch the hem of his garment, write him letters of gratitude, shower him with cash and presents. Film stars wanted to visit him, film companies to immortalize him in Hollywood fashion; organizations voted him money, medals and honorary degrees; and finally Eisenhower himself summoned him to the White House to receive a Presidential citation." Had the Hollywood moguls gotten their way, they would probably have chosen someone like Jimmy Stewart to play Jonas Salk. But it would have been all wrong. It was not only that the balding, bespectacled City College graduate was neither handsome nor tall. The real problem was that Stewart's accustomed screened reticence would have been badly misplaced in a portrayal of the post-announcement Salk.

An egotism appeared that seemed not to have been evident before. The strongest charge leveled against the young superstar was his inability or unwillingness to share credit for an accomplishment that was felt by his colleagues to be the culmination of the work of so many others. Salk ignored

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even those who toiled in his own laboratory at the University of Pittsburgh. Perhaps most unforgivable to the scientific community was his lack of acknowledgment of the contribution of Dr. Isabel Morgan of Johns Hopkins, who, between 1945 and 1950, had accomplished the crucial step of immunizing monkeys against polio by using a vaccine made with virus that had been inactivated, or "killed," with formalin. By doing exactly the same thing in humans, Salk was only taking the next logical step in the journey begun by Morgan and others. None of those who had established the principles and the practices upon which the new vaccine was based was granted a share in the public acclaim.

Salk paid dearly for letting himself succumb to fast fame. Within three weeks of the day of celebration, some 4 million children had received doses of his vaccine, prepared by a total of five commercial laboratories. By late April, 200 cases of polio with eleven fatalities had been traced to a faulty vaccine made by Cutter Laboratories of Berkeley, California. There would be many more the following year. Accusations flew in all directions, but Salk was able to overcome those directed at him. What he was not able to overcome was the fact that his transformation from promising young virology researcher to the conquering hero of polio did not sit well with his colleagues.

Although the publicity must have been a factor, the real reason Jonas Salk was never fully accepted by those whom he would have liked to consider his peers is simply that the scientific quality of his contribution was not thought to be great. When a Nobel Prize was to be awarded for the solution of the polio challenge, it went not to Salk but to John Enders, Thomas Weller and Fred Robbins, who had enormously magnified the field's potential by devising the method of growing the virus in a culture medium other than nervous tissue, a magnificent achievement without which continuing research progress would not have been possible. Even the distinction of being elected to the National Academy of Sciences eluded Jonas Salk because that pantheon of investigators did not think his career merited it.

Compared to establishment figures such as Enders, Francis, Paul and Sabin, Salk was a Jonas-come-lately. His only previous noteworthy contribution was his work with Francis on an inactivated-virus influenza vaccine. Since the basis for his polio studies had been so well constructed by others, it was felt by those close to the field that Salk had overcome no great obstacle. In later years, his bitter rival Sabin would tell the medical historian Saul Benison, "You could go into the kitchen and do what he did." Despite the flagrant exaggeration of Sabin's comments, they seemed to echo the sentiments of other scientists as well.

There was far more at work here than the mere absence of high regard for a colleague's work. The fact is that the weight of scientific opinion in the late 1940s and the '50s favored the search for a vaccine made from live but attenuated, or "weakened," virus. The inactivated or "killed" variety that Salk developed is more difficult to administer and would confer a degree of immunity far less lasting. An attenuated virus vaccine produces mild subclinical infection in those to whom it is administered, as well as the likelihood that it will spread, like any contagious disease, to the non-treated population. Thus, many who have not been immunized develop antibodies that protect them against the disease.

Salk's experience with the inactivated virus he developed against influenza determined his decision to pursue a similar course when he began polio research in the late 1940s. Sabin, on the other hand, had begun studying polio as early as the epidemic of 1931; and in 1939 he had been the investigator who debunked the long-held theory that the route of entry of the disease was by way of the nose. His vast experience with the microbe had convinced him that the advantages of live-virus vaccine far outweighed the consideration that an inactivated preparation could be developed in a shorter time period.

Some of the most convincing support for the live-virus concept came from studies done by John Paul in 1950. Testing the blood of a large group of Eskimos in several Alaskan communities where the last polio exposure had occurred in a 1930 epidemic, Paul found that 80 percent of the adults but none of the subjects under the age of 20 had antibodies to the virus. "This meant," he wrote, "that once these Eskimos had been exposed and infected the resulting immunity *was* lasting!" This striking finding, which the usually undemonstrative Paul accented with italics and an exclamation point, was convincing evidence that a vaccine made from live virus was far preferable to Salk's approach.

1960 was Sabin's time to ride the white charger—or it would have been, had his thunder not been stolen five years earlier. In June of that year, the American Medical Association endorsed the live-virus vaccine that he had developed and tested extensively in Russia (and later elsewhere, including the United States). Within several months it was federally licensed and was rapidly replacing its inactivated predecessor as the vaccine of choice. Salk continued to argue that converting to live vaccine was "both unnecessary and ill-advised," because it carried some minimal risk of developing polio. In 1977, nevertheless, the authoritative Institute of Medicine came out in favor of Sabin's vaccine. With the exception of a few countries, it has become recognized worldwide as *the* proper method of immunization.

Unlike the newcomer Salk, Sabin had long been acknowledged by 1955 as one of America's leading virologists. His investigations, while serving in the Middle East and Mediterranean areas during World War II, of sandfly and dengue fevers and hepatitis had added to the luster of his earlier achievements with polio. In the postwar period he studied Japanese B encephalitis and continued his polio investigations. By the early 1950s, he was among the world's most experienced researchers in the use of both inactivated and attenuated virus vaccines. It was comparison with a background like Sabin's that made Salk seem a lightweight, especially to the competitive Sabin himself.

There was certainly an intense rivalry between the two, but there was no race between them (notwithstanding a statement to that effect in the breathless publicity accompanying Gould's book). Even though many proponents of a live vaccine knew it would be years beyond 1955 before they could develop their method of immunization, they considered it unwise to "waste" vast resources funding Salk's work when they had better uses for the money. He and his minority of supporters, on the other hand, made the appropriate point that a vaccine was needed *soon*, and in this he was backed by Basil O'Connor, the dynamic and shrewd president of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

Gould paints a lively portrait of O'Connor, whose deep involvement in the fight against polio began soon after he initiated his law partnership with FDR in 1925. A man of wit, charisma and wily charm, he goaded scientists and laity alike in every aspect of research, treatment and fund-raising, from provision of social services all along the spectrum to the most esoteric laboratory-bench research. O'Connor was indefatigable in his efforts, visionary in his ability to project short-term and long-term goals, and firm in his certainty that he knew what needed to be done. He was a man of determination

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and was possessed of the self-confident pragmatism needed to achieve his objectives. In the conflict over attenuated versus inactivated virus, he allied himself with the side that would produce a usable vaccine first, and he became, in a sense, Salk's mentor.

Publicity was beneficial to the foundation and O'Connor pursued it vigorously, encouraging Salk in the same direction. In spite of his preference for early and highly visible results, however, he understood the goals of scientific research as few laymen of that or any other time, and it is for this reason that he never stopped his openhanded funding of Sabin's investigations. It was this kind of vision and perception that lay behind O'Connor's most lasting and perhaps greatest contribution, which transcended even his role in the conquest of polio. Almost singlehandedly, O'Connor created the concept of the voluntary health organization.

Such groups as the American Cancer Society, the American Diabetes Association and the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Organization owe much of their present form and direction to the example set by Basil O'Connor. The foundation supported the research of a generation of virologists in the United States, and played a large role in the training of orthopedists, physical therapists, nurses and social workers. The organization's pioneering work in this regard is often forgotten. Fifty-nine percent of its budget went to such programs as the care and rehabilitation of those crippled by polio, while only 13 percent was spent on administration. Today, when so much academic research is funded by government in the form of the National Institutes of Health, it is interesting to remember that the foundation spent nearly $2,000,000 on polio research in 1953 while the NIH contributed only $72,000. O'Connor was never able to disguise his own self-interest, but his social conscience was the final measure of the man.

Many of these things are to be found in Tony Gould's book, described in a colorful, fluid style that brings O'Connor and Salk and other protagonists in the drama of polio vividly before a reader's eyes. The patrician Enders, the prickly Sabin, the direct and hard-driving Tom Rivers: these scientists, and the labyrinthine relationships among them, are the stuff of fiction, and Gould does ample justice to the entire panorama.

Still, one wishes that such a gifted writer had dug somewhat deeper. Gould relies almost entirely on secondary sources for historical material, even to the point of quoting extracts from several easily accessible medical articles directly from the popular books in which he found them, rather than reviewing the paper in its original setting. It is difficult to avoid wondering how many of the more than twenty bibliographical entries for scientific or scholarly publications were actually read by Gould. Extracts, quotations and similar material affect an author's perspective much more than is generally realized; separated from their place of origin and read only in the context of someone else's popularized version of events, these materials are sometimes misleading.

The secondary sources that provide the bulk of context for Gould's historical descriptions are those by Richard Carter, Jane Smith, Greer Williams, John Rowan Wilson, Saul Benison and John Paul. The first four of those books are popularizations. Only the ones by Saul Benison and John Paul are sufficiently authoritative and detached to be reliably used for proper historic documentation. Carter's *Breakthrough: The Saga of Jonas Salk* is an overt hagiography written at the suggestion of Basil O'Connor, with the aim of raising money to support the Salk Institute. No wonder Gould finds Carter "a skeptic" about statements by Russian officials concerning the hugely successful field trials of Sabin's vaccine.

None of the medical writings of Enders, Sabin, Salk or the others appear in the bibliography appended to *A Summer Plague*, and this lessens the book's value for readers who want to look further. When a book is so extensively (if inconsistently) annotated as this one, readers assume a certain thoroughness, but it is not to be found here. A number of the major players in the polio story were still alive when this book was being written, but Gould seems to have spoken to none of them. Rather than rely so heavily on the printed page of popular writers, he might have derived much of real value from the personal recollections of Dorothy Horstmann, Hilary Koprowski, Joseph Melnick, Fred Robbins and Jonas Salk himself. (Horstmann lives less than a mile from Gould's publisher. Yale University Press, which is ordinarily so scrupulous in having its books reviewed by authoritative readers before accepting them for publication, never contacted her.)

A visit with the eminent historian of polio Saul Benison might have added to Gould's perspective on the live versus killed virus debate, and would certainly have enlarged his familiarity with the leading personalities. Not only did Benison work closely with Basil O'Connor on the foundation archives, but as a leader

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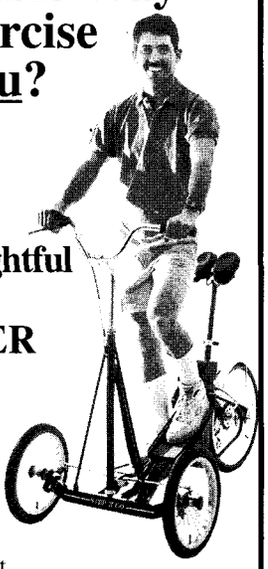

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in the field of oral history he conducted an extensive series of interviews with Sabin between 1974 and 1980. (Not yet published, the Sabin interviews have added a vital dimension to Benison's vast knowledge of the entire polio saga.) Had Gould spoken with Benison he might have learned, for example, that the generosity of John Enders was even greater than he knew: during the course of being interviewed for *Tom Rivers: Reflections on a Life in Medicine and Science*, Rivers told Benison that Enders insisted that his young associates, Fred Robbins and Thomas Weller, share the Nobel Prize with him. A good historian might also have directed Gould to the source of the culture medium that led them to their discovery and eventually the prize. Their studies took place during one of the periodic surges of enthusiasm for universal circumcision of newborns, and foreskins were plentiful at the Boston Lying-In Hospital. Embryonic or near-embryonic tissues being needed for the research, a readily available source presented itself.

Gould does claim that "three medical historians, Saul Benison, Naomi Rogers and Daniel J. Wilson, all spoke to me either in person or on the phone about their work." Since the book's historical descriptions show no evidence of a serious talk with Benison, I contacted the vigorous septuagenarian, and he told me that his only contact with Gould was a brief phone call, in which the conversation consisted of his answering questions about Naomi Rogers's 1992 book *Dirt and Disease: Polio Before FDR*, which the historian reviewed in the pages of *The Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*. Gould's exaggeration somewhat qualifies his claims for authenticity.

A Summer Plague, in sum, cannot be taken seriously as a contribution to the study of polio's history. Perhaps it is better to think of it as a well-written tale, even if most of it is twice-told. Gould's storytelling is what will attract readers to his book, and keep them turning its pages. Although Gould is forced by the vastness of his subject to describe it in what are essentially separate pieces, he makes the whole narrative unfold naturally. He begins his tale in New York City at the height of the devastating polio epidemic in 1916. A keen sense of place pervades this chapter so intensely that the pessimism and the misdirected efforts of the health authorities seem almost to arise from the very conditions of daily life in the city.

Enter the man whom Gould calls "the laughing cavalier," Franklin Delano Roosevelt. A mood of optimism instantly suffuses the narrative. Since it was forbidden to photograph FDR in situations that might reveal the degree of his physical disability, a re-reading of history has recently appeared in which we are to believe that the public was barely aware of it. Those of us old enough to remember know that the truth was otherwise. And Gould shows us a Roosevelt so personally involved in the day-to-day campaign against polio, so acutely aware of his role as an inspiration to those crippled by it, that today's readers will see facets of that great-hearted spirit which have been forgotten.

"An Angel Abroad," the title of Gould's chapter on Sister Elizabeth Kenny, derives from a memo that was sent by Basil O'Connor to FDR. The designation is as controversial as was the woman herself. Gould begins by pointing out that there is no commemoration in the Polio Hall of Fame at Warm Springs for "the outspoken nurse from the Australian outback who revolutionised the treatment of polio in the teeth of powerful opposition—medical, political and personal." The rest of that paragraph gives the flavor of the book's style.

> Not that one should feel too sorry for this strapping, upright Irish-Australian "Sister" (in the nursing rather than the religious sense): she was no mean bruiser herself, often pre-emptively lashing out at a potential opponent. She was also a tireless propagandist—worthy rival, in this respect, even to O'Connor—the subject of a schmaltzy Hollywood movie and for many years second only to Eleanor Roosevelt (and once first) in the U.S. women's popularity stakes, as conducted by Dr. Gallup.

That brief extract goes far toward explaining Elizabeth Kenny's absence from the Polio Hall of Fame, and it is also a fair sample of Tony Gould's writing. He further describes Kenny with words such as "authoritarian," "boorish" and "abusive." Writers are quoted to whom she is "a giant of a sea captain" and "a real pain in the ass." But the pain in the ass prevailed, and the National Foundation endorsed her innovative treatments in December, 1941, though it refused to fund the Kenny Institute less than two years later.

Sister Kenny did, in fact, accomplish a kind of revolution. Before her, the treatment of crippling polio was primarily conducted with prolonged rigid immobilization using splints or even plaster casts, even though no one could demonstrate any real benefits from such a psychologically harmful approach. It was Sister Kenny's hypothesis that muscle spasms must be relaxed with warm moist packs, followed by passive movement and the encouragement of early reactivation. To a greater degree than Salk, Sister Kenny allowed herself to become the subject of a cult and the creature of publicity, a mistake that angered physicians and slowed the acceptance of her teachings. She was a walking paradox. A pediatrician who visited the Kenny Institute in Minneapolis came away with feelings so mixed that he described her two facets in a single phrase: "Miss Kenny is an amazing woman with a rather unfortunate Messiah complex."

It is not for its portrayals of the polio conquerers that Gould's book is most valuable but for its description of the lives of its victims. In telling the individual stories of a group of badly disabled survivors, Gould's voice softens; the adjectives are gentler and seem fewer in number. These are people he really understands, and in him they recognize a comrade. The very matter-of-factness with which they tell of their experiences in long fascinating passages, and the straightforward manner in which Gould presents them to us, stand in stark contrast to the colorful interjections that characterize much of the rest of this book. An air of calm and familiarity pervades the hundred pages the author gives over to these tales of perseverance and courage as he relates them one by one.

But Tony Gould is on familiar territory here and needs no instruction. He contracted polio at the age of 20, while serving in Hong Kong as an officer with a Gurkha regiment. He came close to death, being saved only by the hurried insertion of a breathing tube into his windpipe. He progressed from iron lung to a leg brace and crutches, and finally to canes, all the time receiving intensive physiotherapy. Although he no longer wears the leg brace, he still requires two canes for balance when he walks. And so he is, to use his own words, "my own exegete." When he has completed the stories of the others, he writes about himself. The experience of polio, he writes, can help a person to "discover within yourself resources you might not otherwise have found." That has so often been said about one or another of the afflictions of life that it has shrunk to the dimensions of the shopworn. And yet there are many proofs of its truth, among which is now the simple eloquence of Tony Gould when he writes about things he knows well, when he tells his deeply affecting stories of those who have endured polio, and his own story, too.

SHERWIN B. NULAND is Clinical Professor of Surgery at Yale University and the author most recently of *How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final Chapters* (Knopf).

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The Rebel

BY JOSEPH FRANK

The Master of Petersburg by J. M. Coetzee

(Viking, 250 pp., $21.95)

J.M. Coetzee is a subtle and complex writer whose works invariably contain more than appears on their seemingly pellucid surfaces. He made his reputation with novels that focused on the psychological tension created in the white South African psyche by the social and human anomalies of apartheid. But his special gift is to raise this particular conflict, through a certain starkness of treatment and careful choice of detail, into a parable of the master/slave relationship in all colonial circumstances, in all unjust structures of power. In addition to such works, Coetzee also produced a strange little book called *Foe*, which was essentially a rewriting of *Robinson Crusoe* by a female narrator washed ashore on the island of the original Crusoe, who sees many things not contained in the first version, and who unsuccessfully struggles to persuade Defoe to convey *her* version of events after she returns to England accompanied by the silent Friday, whose thoughts and feelings she tries to fathom.

Such a work reminds us that Coetzee, who teaches literature at the University of Capetown, is a professional linguist and literary scholar as well as a novelist. He sometimes prefers to express his ideas by means of literary pastiche as well as through his highly stylized treatment of contemporary South African life; and his new book is another contribution to this genre of pastiche. *The Master of Petersburg* draws not on the beginnings of the English novel but on the mid-nineteenth-century Russian novel, in particular on a number of Dostoevsky's creations, great and small. The central figure of the novel is Dostoevsky himself. Another important protagonist is the revolutionary Sergey Nechaev, whom Dostoevsky portrayed, though with no attempt at literal exactitude, in *The Devils*, and so it might be thought that *The Devils* is Coetzee's most important source; but he has culled from many places for his own purposes.

Coetzee's story begins in 1869, when Dostoevsky began the writing of *The Devils* and was living in Dresden with his second wife, afraid to return to Russia because he might be thrown into debtors' prison. In the novel, though, he returns to St. Petersburg with a false passport because he is notified that his stepson, Pavel Isaev, has died. Dostoevsky did have a stepson, the child of his first wife, whom he brought up as his son, and who was a rather feckless though by no means delinquent young man. Pavel, or Pasha, held a number of clerical jobs until his death in 1900. Coetzee thus plays fast and loose with the historical record by killing off Pavel Isaev in 1869; and this raises a more general problem about the book.

Other events that are simply recorded in Coetzee's novel, such as Dostoevsky's adulterous affair in St. Petersburg, or his supposedly catching a glimpse of Nechaev and Bakunin together at a meeting of the League for Peace and Freedom in Geneva, have no basis in fact. Coetzee is a novelist, of course, and he has the novelist's right to play with history. Still, it is regrettable that he did not include a warning to his readers, many of whom will be unfamiliar with the details of Dostoevsky's biography, not to take his fiction as fact. Many will no doubt do so, for the same reason that, as Dostoevsky complained, people thought he had murdered his wife because this was the crime imputed to the narrator of *House of the Dead*.

The fictional Dostoevsky thus arrived in St. Petersburg to gather up Pasha's effects and to look into the causes of his death. Coetzee's opening pages, rather than reminiscent of the *The Devils*, recall the atmosphere of Dostoevsky's little-known early story "The Landlady," which is somewhat atypical of his work and written in a garishly Romantic style in imitation of Gogol's Ukrainian tales. Coetzee's Dostoevsky moves into the rooming house in which Pasha lived, and soon enters into a passionate love affair with the enigmatic landlady, much like the young intellectual Ordynov in Dostoevsky's story. And though Coetzee's tonality is a good bit more subdued, his fictional Dostoevsky drifts through the action in much the same semi-hypnotic fashion as Ordynov drifts

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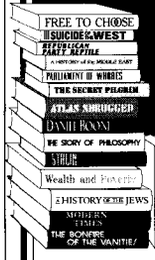
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through *The Landlady*, which some critics have taken to be (mistakenly, in my view) a dream-like hallucination of the main character. *The Master of Petersburg* is written in a very similar register, and Coetzee makes no attempt to provide any realistic psychological motivation for his figures and their actions. Rather than a novel, one might use a musical analogy and call Coetzee's book a poetic fantasia on Dostoevskian themes; it should be read as such a work, and not approached with more conventional expectations as a work of fiction.

The fictional Dostoevsky is portrayed as obsessed by Pasha's death (like so many other Coetzee characters in the grip of different obsessions), and in some obscure way refusing to surrender him to the oblivion of the grave. Motifs from Dostoevsky's work are interwoven with the character's attempt to cope with the sensation of loss produced by Pasha's death, which he feels as really his own. "I am the one who is dead, he thinks; or rather, I died but my death failed to arrive." Just as Prince Myshkin is haunted by the thought of what a condemned man feels in the few moments before the fall of the guillotine, so Dostoevsky here

> cannot bear ... the thought that, for the last fraction of the last instant of his fall, [Pavel jumped, or was pushed, from a height] Pavel knew that nothing could save him, that he was dead. He wants to believe Pavel was protected from that certainty ... [but] he wants to believe in order to etherize himself against the knowledge that Pavel, falling, knew everything.

By thinking such a thought, Dostoevsky imagines that he is identifying himself completely with Pavel, who is "thinking in him, he thinking ... in Pavel. The thought keeps Pavel alive suspended in this fall."

When he goes to pick up Pavel's confiscated papers at the police station, Dostoevsky is informed of Pavel's connection with the Nechaev conspiracy, an underground revolutionary group which murdered one of their members for suspected treason. Readers will think of Raskolnikov's visits to a similar police station, and Coetzee teases them (and amuses himself) by allowing his fictitious Dostoevsky to clarify an obscure sense of having once been in an exactly similar situation. "Somewhere to the side falls the nagging shadow of a memory: surely he has been here before, in this very anteroom or one like it, and had an attack or a fainting fit!" Yes, indeed! He *had* been here before as Raskolnikov, summoned to pay an IOU and fainting when he hears talk of the murder he has just committed.

Pasha's papers contain a list of people condemned to execution by Nechaev's revolutionary group, "The People's Vengeance"; and the councillor Maximov, who physically resembles the magistrate in *Crime and Punishment* ("a bald man with the tubby figure of a peasant woman"), suggests that perhaps Pavel's death, rather than an accident or suicide, was a murder by the Nechaev group. Dostoevsky expresses horror and then revulsion at Pasha's links with Nechaev but at the same time sees the revolutionary as the embodiment of a much larger force. What moves Nechaev and accounts for his uncanny influence is not "ideas" (the historical Dostoevsky would have contested this formulation), but "a spirit, and Nechaev himself is not its embodiment but its host; or rather, he is under possession by it." For all his historically accurate hatred of Nechaev, Dostoevsky is finally stirred to protest by Maximov's scornfully detached reading of an awkwardly romantic story written by Pasha, which contains a note of social protest by including the murder of a lecherous landowner about to rape a young peasant girl.

Dostoevsky instinctively springs to Pasha's defense against Maximov's amused contempt, and his tirade broaches what will soon become an important thematic motif. For Dostoevsky accuses Maximov of suppressing his enjoyment of everything that, as an upholder of the law, he presumably wishes to combat and destroy. Of the murdered landowner, Dostoevsky says:

> "[D]o you suffer with him, or do you secretly exult behind the arm that swings the axe? You don't answer? Let me tell you then: reading is being the arm and being the axe *and* being the skull; reading is giving yourself up, not holding yourself at a distance and jeering."

As for Maximov's pretense of merely enforcing the law: "Do you not truly want to chop off his [Nechaev's] head and stamp your feet in his blood?"

Literature here, for Coetzee's Dostoevsky, involves a total imaginative participation with all the figures of the story, not only with the victim but also with the murderer revenging an injustice; and Maximov has no right to feel morally superior to the ruthless revolutionary he is pursuing. The fictional Dostoevsky in this way reveals both his view of literature as a surrender to every facet of good and evil projected in a text, and his own capacity to transcend his hatred of Nechaev by viewing Maximov as equally guilty of reveling in bloodshed. One suspects here the influence of Mikhail Bakhtin's suggestive (but somewhat exaggerated) view that the source of Dostoevsky's greatness as a writer is precisely this ability to identify with all his characters to an equal degree, and to allow them unlimited freedom to express their own point of view.

The theme that dominates Coetzee's early chapters—Dostoevsky's desire somehow to keep Pavel alive in memory and his guilty despair at his failure as a father—becomes quite tedious after a while, and less and less artistically persuasive. Luckily, it is taken up and fused with

The Latvian

Knowing John, it might have been.
Then again, maybe *you* know him—
food on his dried-up puss,
handsome for a day, a stunning
figure.

Why any of this bothers me, *I'll* never
know. My place is down here, with you
pagans and sun-worshippers, to whom
we turn when all else is exhausted, as, in fact,
it usually is. Then smiles break out
on rain-stippled streets, plaid plastic hats
and flowers appear. It's enough
to put the "cow" back in "macabre."

And we weave together the lesson
of today, me holding the ball of yarn,
you at your embroidery hoop.
Relief comes on strong. It pits
man against ghost, neighbor to neighbor,
falling down as the fur flies.

Who knew if the embassy had tickets,
or if they would even sell one?
By that time it was half past nine:
too late to dust the refrigerated air,
too early for the hockey scores.
Yet if I infiltrate this page of music,
like a violinist inflating Mozart, the seams,
the dear themes, come true.
We are all a falling in love.
Let's leave it that way.

JOHN ASHBERY

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the Nechaev theme, which is far more interesting. Nechaev's group finally contacts Dostoevsky, first through a roly-poly female emissary and then through a transvestite Nechaev, incongruously clad and carefully powdered but with hairs sprouting on his chin. Nechaev insists that the police killed Pavel, and appeals to Dostoevsky, as an ex-revolutionary, to take up the struggle again on the side of his murdered son. Nechaev's passionate plea makes Dostoevsky think of "Christ in his wrath.... The Christ of the Old Testament, the Christ who scourged the usurers out of the temple." But he replies to Nechaev's accusation that "all you can do is mumble and shake your head and cry," with a telling retort. "Is it the voice of the people you obey, or just your own voice, a little disguised so that you need not recognize it?"

The fictional Dostoevsky becomes more and more involved with Nechaev, whom he describes in terms used by the historical Dostoevsky for Stavrogin. "He is a sensualist. He is an extremist of the senses. He wants to live in a body at the limits of sensation, at the limits of bodily knowledge." Nechaev takes him to the decrepit tower in Petersburg from which Pavel fell (or was thrown), and they climb it in a storm-tossed night with "the roofs of St. Petersburg glinting in the rain, the row of tiny lamps along the quayside." Nechaev accuses Dostoevsky of having neglected Pasha, unerringly touching the sorest spot of his conscience ("We were his family when he had no family"); and as the two men shriek in the howling wind while they clamber above the city Coetzee craftily anticipates the reader's reaction to the staginess of this effects. "In fact the whole scene—two men on a moonlit platform high above the streets struggling against the elements, shouting over the wind, denouncing each other—is false, melodramatic": these words are supposed to transcribe Dostoevsky's reaction to what he is experiencing.

The final chapters in which Nechaev and Dostoevsky verbally cross swords constitute the ideological climax of the book, and set "the spirit of justice" against what might be called the spirit of freedom. What will happen, Dostoevsky asks, "once the tempest of the people's vengeance has done its work and everyone has been levelled? Will you still be free to be whom you wish? Will each of us be free to be whom we wish, at last?" Dostoevsky invokes Shigalov's theory of equality praised by Peter Verkhovensky in the *The Devils* ("if another Copernicus were to arise he should have his eyes gouged out"); but Nechaev replies with an apocalyptic image of total destruction, as a prelude to a perpetual regeneration, which radicalizes even the historical Nechaev and his mentor Bakunin.

The future, for Nechaev, is a revolution "when everything is reinvented, everything erased and reborn: law, morality, the family, everything." The "old way of thinking" will be abolished and (anticipating Mao) "the peasants will be the teachers and the professors will be the students.... Everyone will be reborn with a new heart." When Dostoevsky mentions God, Nechaev rapturously replies that "God will be envious ... [and] the angels will stand around us in circles singing their hosannas." Even more, the souls of the dead, the soul of Pavel Isaev, will arise and walk the earth again. Imitating the Christ of the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor, Dostoevsky embraces Nechaev, "breathing the sour smell of his carbuncular flesh, sobbing, laughing, he kisses him on the left cheek and on the right." Still, in a last feeble effort to resist being swept away, he threatens Nechaev with eternal damnation. But Nechaev charges him with ignorance of theology and invokes the apocryphal legend of the Mother of God who, making "a pilgrimage to hell to plead for the damned," refuses to desist until all have been forgiven (the historical Dostoevsky uses this legend in *The Brothers Karamazov*).

Finally, at the end of Coetzee's book, street fighting between the students and police has broken out, fires are burning, and "a cloud of smoke hangs over the city." (Coetzee may have been thinking of, and magnifying, what occurred in St. Petersburg in 1862.) Dostoevsky feels that he has been defeated by Nechaev, that he "has lost because, in this debate, he does not believe himself." He leafs through Pavel's papers, and we are met for the first time by Dostoevsky's self-awareness as a writer. For what Pavel (or his master Nechaev, as well as the landlady) did not understand is that "I pay too ... I pay and I sell: that is my life. Sell my life, sell the lives of those around me.... Sell you, sell your daughter [Matryona], sell all those I love.... A life without honour; treachery without limit; confession without end." All this has led to a terrifying awareness of his own uncertainty, which requires him, if he is to continue to create, "to put aside all that he himself is, all he has become, down to his very features, and become as a babe again."

By the end of the book, in the chapter significantly called "Stavrogin," Coetzee seems to equate Dostoevsky as a writer—or writing in general—with the efforts of this Byronic dandy transformed into

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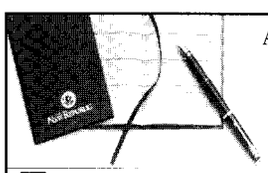

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metaphysical rebel to wipe out the boundaries of good and evil. Dostoevsky does not appear as a writer at all until this last chapter, but finally he sits down to compose in Pavel's room, determined to "refuse the chloroform of terror or unconsciousness," and instead, "to live in Russia and hear the voices of Russia murmuring within him. To hold it all within him: Russia, Pavel, death." No longer merely the victim of epilepsy or madness, he willfully becomes their vehicle: "not to emerge from the fall unscathed ... to wrestle with the whistling darkness, to absorb it, to make it his medium; to turn the falling into a flying, even if a flying as slow and old and clumsy as a turtle." But he also feels, as he unpacks his writing-case, that he is engaging in an act of betrayal.

What Dostoevsky writes, in the empty pages in Pavel's notebook, is a reconstitution of Pavel's life in the landlady's apartment, garnished with details taken from Stavrogin's confession, the suppressed chapter of *The Devils* published only after Dostoevsky's death, which recounts his seduction and violation of a young girl. What he has written is "an assault upon the innocence of a child. It is an act for which he can expect no forgiveness," and is in effect a temptation of God. "Now God must speak, now God dare no longer remain silent." He imagines himself standing outside his own soul, "somewhere he stands and watches while he and God circle each other." Writing thus involves the loss of one's soul, it is a challenge to God, and he feels again that "he has betrayed everyone; nor does he see that his betrayal could go deeper." The book ends with the action unresolved; we do not know how or why Pavel died, or whether the fictional Dostoevsky returns to Dresden. And Dostoevsky is left only with a sense of complete emptiness and dispossession, his mouth filled with the bitter taste of gall. "*They pay him lots of money for writing books,* said the child [Matryona], repeating the dead child [Pavel]. What they failed to say was that he had to give up his soul in return."

This is an enigmatic and rather puzzling book whose aim is difficult to unravel. Clearly Coetzee is not attempting, like a historical novelist, to convey any sort of historically correct image of Dostoevsky's life in 1869; he prefers to make use of his writer's liberties and to invent his own details. He makes only a very perfunctory stab at filling in the St. Petersburg background, and the effect that he creates is more somnambulistic than realistic. What, then, is he trying to do?

Coetzee, one must remember, is a South African writer, and it may be that he felt himself to be living (until very recently) in a society even more repressive that of Russia in the nineteenth century, and poised like Russia on the edge of a revolutionary upheaval. Dostoevsky is the greatest novelist of modern revolutionary crisis, of the clash of values that such a crisis involves. It is not difficult to understand why Coetzee, who has used the pastiche of *Foe* to dramatize the issues of feminism and multiculturalism, should use Dostoevsky in the same way to express the dilemmas racking his own society. Coetzee may well have lived the clash between the spirit of justice and the spirit of freedom with all the intensity of Dostoevsky.

But there is also, as we have seen, the problem of writing and the writer, which Coetzee presents so poignantly; and here perhaps he is obliquely taking into account his own personal situation in South African literature. There has never been any ambiguity about his unswerving hostility to the abominations of apartheid, now happily a thing of the past; but he has been harshly criticized in his homeland because his novels did not attack these evils in any overt, socially propagandistic manner. A typical charge, made in 1982, accused him of giving "privileged attention to the predicament of a liberally petty bourgeois intelligentsia." Even the publication, a year later, of his intensely moving *Life and Times of Michael K*, whose central character is black or a person of color vainly seeking to lead a normal, peaceful life, did not put an end to such brickbats. In 1986, another critic attributed Coetzee's increasing international fame "to the muddled pathos of the position of the white South Africans," which gives such fiction as his its worldwide appeal. Coetzee himself has commented somewhat sadly on the difference in his status at home and abroad.

The Master of Petersburg, then, may be an implicit act of self-defense, a defense of the writer's obligation in an explosive revolutionary period to participate creatively in all sides of the human bedlam, even at the cost of personal self-abandonment. Such an obligation seems to stir Dostoevsky when he rewards Nechaev with the kiss of Christian forgiveness, while being left himself only with a tragic sense of loss and self-betrayal. Is this novel more a self-revelation than may appear at first sight? We can only speculate. One thing, though, can be stated unequivocally: Coetzee is an intriguing and ingenious writer.

JOSEPH FRANK is the author most recently of *Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years, 1865-1871* (Princeton University Press).

TRB *continued from page 4*

The sensible center can be traced back to Eisenhower official Arthur Larson's concept of "modern Republicanism" and to the Ripon Society, which was founded after the 1964 election to save the Republican Party from Goldwater conservatism. Its Democratic counterpart, the Democratic Leadership Council, has tried to combat what it calls "liberal fundamentalism."

This center is based in the wealthy, cosmopolitan suburbs of the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts and in the gentrified neighborhoods of major cities. Its economic outlook is global rather than national; it sees free trade and immigration as a boon to prosperity; it prides itself on its racial tolerance and its support for feminism and gay rights; but it sees government as bloated, antiquated and in need of reinvention. Like the radical center, it has often found itself politically homeless in the party system.

The sensible center supported Jimmy Carter over George Wallace in 1976; some of its adherents backed John Anderson over Reagan in 1980 and Gary Hart over Walter Mondale in 1984. In 1992, Bill Clinton wowed the sensible center, but within a year he had thoroughly alienated it—through ineptitude more than policy. Now its members look to Weld and Christie Whitman, Al Gore without Clinton, and Bill Bradley as an independent. And they see definite promise in Colin Powell, who, they believe, could rescue the Republican Party from the Christian Coalition and the country from four more years of Clinton.

On social issues, Powell is clearly one of them. He hasn't said where he stands on trade, immigration or runaway shops because his interlocutors, charter members of the sensible center, invariably fail to ask. But his closeness to Washington lobbyist Kenneth Duberstein and to the town's premier global wheeler-dealers, the Carlyle Group, suggests that he shares their enthusiasm for global capitalism.

Can Powell, a representative of the sensible rather than the radical center, win the Republican nomination? And can he, running either as Republican or a third-party independent, win the presidency? He is now receiving the universal acclaim due a military hero, but, in the course of a long campaign, images from the past cannot sustain the present. If the previous four elections are any indication, Powell won't succeed unless he can also attract the radical center—and for someone with his outlook and advisers, that's not going to be easy.

JOHN B. JUDIS

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A Message from Negative Population Growth, Inc.

Immigration Fuels U.S. Population Growth

We at Negative Population Growth, Inc. (NPG) believe that our country is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long range carrying capacity of its resources and environment.

We believe, therefore, that U.S. population growth should be halted as soon as possible, and eventually reversed.

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In the decade of the 80s we grew by some 25 million. Immigration, both legal and illegal, accounted for about 40 percent of that huge increase in our numbers. Projections are that we will grow by at least as much in the 90s.

If present rates of fertility and immigration continue, our population, now over 264 million, will pass 400 million shortly after 2050, with no end to growth in sight! Such growth would be catastrophic both for our environment, and for our standard of living.

We need to halt **illegal** immigration and reduce **legal** immigration to a comprehensive ceiling of 100,000 a year, including all relatives, refugees and asylees.

We now allow more than 800,000 **legal** immigrants to come here each year. Their numbers are swelled by over 300,000 **illegal** immigrants who each year settle here permanently.

Advocates of Massive Immigration Are Wrong!

There are powerful forces that fight not only to keep immigration at the present high level, but to increase it. Among them are employers who want low-wage labor, ethnic groups whose leaders seek greater political power, and some humanitarians who believe in virtually open borders.

They also include pro-growth advocates who believe that an ever-growing labor force, fueled by immigration, is necessary to achieve their goal of an ever-increasing GNP. That goal, in the real world of environmental and resource limits, is a recipe for disaster.

How Can We Best Help Others?

Beyond any question, the United States should maintain the humane policies toward immigrants and refugees that have characterized its past.

But we need to express our compassion in an intelligent way. Our priority should be to improve living conditions in the developing countries, rather than to allow vast numbers of their citizens to settle here.

World population is growing by some 90 million a year, and almost all of that growth occurs in the developing countries. We cannot possibly allow more than a tiny fraction of those millions to come here. What can we do to help all those who have no choice but to remain at home?

One thing is crystal clear. The problems of the underdeveloped countries are beyond solution by emigration. To pretend otherwise is simply self-delusion.

Nothing can permanently improve living conditions in these countries unless they first halt their population growth, the root cause of their poverty and environmental degradation.

Those who assert that eradicating poverty is a prerequisite for halting population growth have the process just backwards. Only after halting their population growth can developing countries even begin to bring their standard of living up to an adequate level.

We should spare no effort or expense to help those nations that are prepared to make a determined effort to halt, and eventually to reverse, their population growth.

We Need A Sensible U.S. Immigration Policy

We cannot continue to allow our national immigration policy to be dictated by special interest groups who pursue their own agend as without regard for the broad national interest.

Our immigration policy should be an integral part of a national population policy aimed at halting, and then reversing, our population growth, so that U.S. population can eventually be stabilized at a lower, more sustainable level.

As Americans, our first obligation, to ourselves and to our children and grandchildren, is to restore and preserve the land we have inherited. In shaping our immigration policy, our top priority must be our own national interest, and the welfare of present and future generations of Americans.

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Shul prayer

TAKING MY LEAD FROM BOB DOLE, Phil Gramm and Pat Buchanan, who appeared before the Christian Coalition's annual convention in Washington in September, I pursued my presidential bid by addressing the Jewish Coalition, which was meeting at the same time, at the Airport Hilton in Boca Raton, Florida. One by one, I took up the issues that, I was certain, mattered most to the audience. "What's wrong with a little school prayer?" I began provocatively.

"I'll tell you what's wrong with it," a man yelled at me from the front row. "It stinks!"

"You know, Morris," said the woman beside him, "it wouldn't hurt if you said a prayer once in a while."

"I'll say a prayer," shouted her husband. "I'll say a prayer that you'll walk out on me."

"God will answer your prayer but good!" said the woman, who stormed from the hall, followed by an equal number of boos and cheers.

"Children should pray," a man called out from the rear. "But not in school."

"*Shul* is where you *should* pray," shouted a woman who looked to be 80.

"School. Not *shul*." Someone corrected her.

"*Shul*! That's what I said!" The 80-year-old woman gave a wave of disgust.

"The way schools are today," a man shouted, "you should pray to get out alive!" There were an equal number of boos and cheers. I decided to bring up gun control. "No more guns!" I began forcefully.

A burly man rose to his feet. "Who says, Mr. Big Shot? No more guns for you, maybe. But I have a store to run."

"Sit down and shut up," shouted another man.

"You sit down and shut up," said the first.

"You shut up," said the other.

"No. You shut up," said the first.

"Are you Newt Gingrich?" A man who looked to be 90 addressed the question to me. Then he turned to the audience. "Is he Newt Gingrich?"

This was followed by a great many people shouting, "You shut up," and the 90-year-old asking, "What kind of name is Newt?" Eventually a woman with a small, intense face stood up to speak.

"Friends, friends," she said. "Are we not the Jewish Coalition? We are behaving like savages. We should be united. One for all, all for one. We should think alike!"

"You mean like the Christian Coalition?" another woman asked.

"I'm not saying," she replied, looking purposelessly coy.

"Say it! Say it!" a fierce-looking man called out. "You want us to be like them. Well, I say never!"

"Of course, I don't like their ideas," said the small, intense face. "But see how they stick together. They laugh at the same things. They nod at the same things. They hate the same things. Abortion. The Department of Education. They agree on everything. We agree on nothing!"

"You're wrong!" shouted a man.

"She's right!" shouted another.

"You shut up," yelled several people at once.

"I'll tell you what they agree on," said the fierce-looking man. "They hate Jews!"

"Feh on them" said the 80-year-old woman. "They should choke on pigs, which reminds me: I'm hungry. What's for lunch?"

"The speaker hasn't finished yet," said a young man, who won my friendship. "Go ahead, Newt."

A young woman spoke up: "You know, I hate to say it. But I think that Rex Reed is cute."

"Who's Rex Reed?" Several inquired.

"He's their leader. He tells them what to think," someone explained. "He's very young. You've seen him on TV."

"No," another person said. "Their leader is that minister Cliff Robertson. *He's* the one on TV. His show *really* stinks. It's called the '800 Club.' "

"The '500 Club!' "

"Eight! And he is not their leader. Their leader is Rex Reed."

"His name is *Ralph* Reed," a man called out. "I don't like his face. Too pale."

"Maybe he's sick," said the 80-year-old woman. "He should eat something."

"I don't like his hair," said someone else.

"I still think he's cute," said the young woman who had raised the topic.

"Who?"

"Rex Reed!"

"*Ralph* Reed!"

"Ralph Levine?" asked the 90-year-old man. "He's Jewish?" I tried to win back the audience's attention by turning to family values. Someone asked if I was married.

"My family values shopping," said a man. "I'm going broke and I'm sick of the lot of them."

"And we're sick of you, too, Sy," three or four more people called out.

"What's for lunch?" asked the 80-year-old again.

"Dairy," someone answered.

"I hate dairy," said someone else.

"Is it dairy?" asked the older woman.

"Dairy."

"Dairy?"

I broached the subject of the censorship of rap lyrics.

"Filth!" a man shouted.

"Garbage," shouted another.

A bulldog of a man rose to ask: "Has no one heard of the Fifth Amendment?"

"You mean the First Amendment, stupid," said the fierce-looking man.

"First, Fifth, what's the difference?" asked the 90-year-old.

"Who are you calling stupid?" the bulldog demanded.

"Look," said the small, intense-faced woman again. "I don't like those rap lyrics, either. But people have a right to say what they want. This is America!" At that everyone began to heave with sobs. This probably would have gone on for hours, had an announcement not come over the public address system that a white Mercedes was blocking the driveway.

"Hitler's car!" shouted a woman. "Burn it!"

"It happens to get great mileage," yelled the man who owned the Mercedes.

"How much?" asked another woman.

"Twenty, in the city," he said.

"Not bad," said the woman. "What'd you pay for it?"

"Fifty thousand," said the man.

"Too much. You paid too much."

"Hitler's car!" shouted the first woman again. And she hurled herself at the Mercedes owner.

"It's all that Ralph Levine's fault," said the 90-year-old man.

"In conclusion," I told the audience, "I would like to ask you for your vote."

"What vote?" someone said.

"See here, Newt." A man stood up. "We can't vote for you. We're all voting for Adlai Stevenson." Many people clapped.

"Who says?" cried many other people.

"But Adlai Stevenson is dead," I told them.

"Dead?" asked the older woman. "Adlai Stevenson dead?" There was an awful outcry and more sobbing. I thanked them for their support.

ROGER ROSENBLATT

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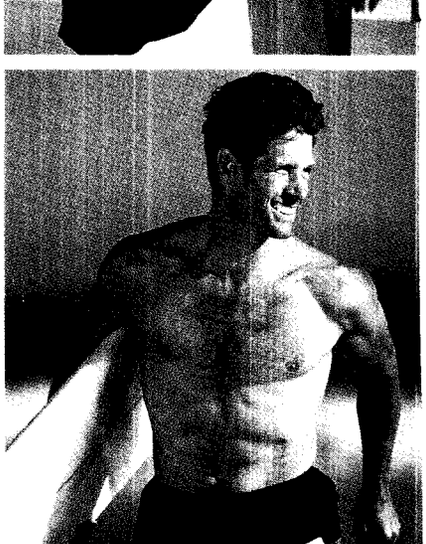

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